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THE ART OF PREACHING

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"Then we
Held high discourse of God and Destiny,
And the dear Christ of human love and hope
Gathering the weary wandering ages round
The throne which was a cross, and conquering
By His meek passion."

WALTER C. SMITH

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**TO
MY STUDENTS
PAST AND PRESENT**

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THE NECESSITY OF PREACHING

“ Multo magis, ut vulgo dicitur, viva vox afficit. Nam licet acriora sunt quæ legas, altius tamen in animo sedent quæ pronuntiatio, vultus, habitus, gestus etiam dicentis adfigit.”

THE YOUNGER PLINY.

“ Writing winna do it : a letter canna look, and pray, and beg, and beseech, as the human voice can do to the human heart. A letter's like the music that ladies have for their spinets : nothing but black scores, compared to the same tune played or sung.”

JEANIE DEANS.

THE NECESSITY OF PREACHING

PREACHING is an institution of the Christian Church, and it is hardly possible to over-estimate its importance. It is essential not merely to the Church's well-being but to her very being; and in every generation there is no surer test of her vitality than the quality of her preachers and her people's appreciation of their ministration.

Import-
ance of
preach-
ing.

It is a striking and significant fact that it was reckoned by the Reformers not only a mark but the first mark of the True Church. "Wheresoever," says Calvin in his *Institutio Christianæ Religionis*,¹ published at Basel in the year 1536, "we see the Word of God sincerely preached and heard, and the Sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it must in no wise be disputed, is a Church of God." *Sincere preaching and hearing of the Word of God and administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's institution*—these, on Calvin's initial view, are the

The Re-
formers'
first
"mark of
the True
Church."

¹ IV. i. 9.

notes or marks of the True Church ; and the Scots Confession of Faith, issued in 1560 and composed under the guidance, if not by the hand, of Knox, accepts these two and adds a third which his later experience of the corruption of the Church commended to Calvin also : “ The notes of the true kirk of God, we believe, confess, and avow, to be, *first*, The true preaching of the word of God ; in the which God hath revealed himself to us, as the writings of the prophets and apostles do declare. *Secondly*, The right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus, which must be annexed to the word and promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our hearts. *Lastly*, Ecclesiastical discipline uprightly administered, as God’s word prescribed, whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished.” ¹

A lost art
in the
Dark
Ages.

These marks of the True Church are redolent of the soil of the Reformation ; and it is in no wise surprising that the Reformers should have placed preaching first when it is considered how effective an instrument they had found it. It was a lost art in the Middle Ages when the ignorance not only of the inferior clergy but of the very bishops was abysmal.² They

¹ Knox’s *History of the Reformation*, p. 215 (McGavin’s edition).

² Cf. Blaikie, *The Preachers of Scotland*, ch. iii.

could hardly spell out their mass-books, and their blunders were often ludicrous. Richard Pace, Secretary to Henry VIII, told of an old priest who in reading his Latin breviary was accustomed to say *mumpsimus* in mistake for *sumpsimus*; and when his error was pointed out to him, he refused to change the manner of pronunciation which he had used for thirty years for "your new-fangled style."¹ Erasmus abounds in good stories. One is that his works had been distributed by a Dominican prior among his monks that they might examine them and note their errors. His edition of St. Jerome was entrusted to a monk "as ignorant of Jerome as of Erasmus"; and he noted promiscuously whatever offended him whether in the text or in the editor's scholia, and thus compiled "a vast forest of errors." The brethren convened and reported the results of their investigations, and this wiseacre was overjoyed that no one had detected so many errors as he. He expected high praise until some one less stupid than the rest perceived that he had made no discrimination between Jerome and Erasmus; and so instead of praise he got nothing but ridicule.² As

¹ Pace, *De Fructu Doctrinæ*, p. 80; cf. Camden, *Remains*, p. 286.

² Erasm. *Epist.* xxii. xxxi. p. 1197 F.

quaint old Dr. John Jortin puts it,¹ "all the blows which he aimed at Erasmus, fell upon poor Jerom, who, if he had been in the land of the living, would have pulled the Monk by the nose, for his egregious stupidity." Again, it is told² of Andrew Forman, Bishop of Moray and Papal Legate for Scotland, that on a visit to Rome he gave an entertainment to the Pope and his Cardinals, and had to say grace; but he blundered so in his Latin that His Holiness and their Eminences lost their gravity. This disconcerted the Bishop, and he blurted out: "A' the fause carills to the deil, *in nomine Patris et Filii et Sancti Spiritus*"; and the company, not understanding his Scots Latinity, responded "*Amen.*"

Evidence
of clerical
ignor-
ance and
immoral-
ity.

It is no wonder that, with a clergy so immersed in ignorance and abandoned, moreover, to the foulest immorality, preaching was at the lowest ebb. Here are two damning testimonies. One is from the poet of the Scottish Reformation, Knox's friend Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, whose *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* was like a trumpet-call to the nation against the iniquities of the Church:

¹ *Life of Erasmus*, p. 463.

² M'Crie's *Knox*, p. 12; Blaikie, *ibid.* p. 38.

“ Great pleasure were to hear one bishop preach,
 One dean, or doctor in divinity ;
 One abbot who could well his convent teach,
 One person flowing in philosophy ;
 I tyne my time to wish what will not be ;
 Were not the preaching of the begging friars,
 Tynt were the faith among the seculars.”

And the other is from *The Gude and Godlie Ballates*, a collection of spiritual songs adapted, “ for avoyding of sin and harlatric,” from the profane and lewd ditties in popular vogue, and retaining the familiar airs, measures, and refrains. One is an adaptation of a hunting song with its huntsman’s cry ; and here is a stanza :

“ The blind Bischop he culd nocht preiche,
 For playing with the lassis ;
 The syllie Freir behuffit to fleiche,
 For almous that he assis ;
 The Curat his creid he culd nocht reid,
 Schame fall the cumpanie :
 Hay trix, tryme go trix
 Under the grene wod-tree.”

The mendicant friars, both these witnesses affirm, were the only preachers, and but for them the laity would have lost all knowledge of religion, since the service of the Church was in a dead language which the priests themselves, for the most part, did not understand and could scarcely pronounce. The

mendicant friars were the only preachers, but their preaching—if preaching it could be called—was concerned either with silly legends of the saints or with appeals for contributions, and was garnished with grotesque buffoonery.¹

The Reformers preachers because of (1) the revival of learning;

Here lay the opportunity of the Reformers; and it is no marvel that they stirred the nations. For they possessed two supreme qualifications. One was the emancipation of their intellects from the thralldom of mediæval ignorance. They were “children of the light,” sons of the Renaissance. The first to lift up his voice in Scotland was Patrick Hamilton, who was burned at the stake at St. Andrews in 1528, when only twenty-four years of age. High-born and related to the royal house,² he travelled on the Continent, where he visited the famous Universities of Paris and Wittenberg and conversed not only with Luther and Melanchthon but with Erasmus and Budæus, returning home enlightened in mind and soul.

¹ Cf. *Erasm. Epist.* vi. iv. (Martino Luthero): “Est Antverpiæ Prior ejus monasterii, vir pure Christianus, qui te unice deamat, tuus olim discipulus, ut prædicat. Is omnium pene solus Christum prædicat. Cæteri fere aut hominum fabulas aut suum quæstum prædicant.” D’Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, ii. pp. 553 ff., “Entertaining Preachers”; also new ed. pp. 94 ff., “Jocular Preachers.”

² Buchanan *Rerum Scotticarum Historia*, xiv. 32: “Patricius Hamiltonius, e Joannis Ducis Albini sorore et fratre Comitiss Aranix natus, juvenis ingenio summo et eruditione singulari.”

“The bright beams of the true light,” says Knox,¹ “which by God’s grace was planted in his heart, began most abundantly to burst forth as well in public as in secret ; for he was (besides his godly knowledge) well learned in philosophy, he abhorred sophistry, and would that the text of Aristotle should have been better understood and more used in the schools than it was ; for sophistry had corrupted all, as well in divinity as in humanity.” His powerful reasoning convinced his hearers, and his gracious spirit won their hearts. “Many,” says the historian Spottiswood,² “gave ear to his preaching, and he had a great following, both for his learning and courteous behaviour to all sorts of people.”

The other and a still higher qualification which the preachers of the Reformation possessed, was their message. None of their sermons have survived, for they were never written and never printed. They were *conciones ad populum*, addressed, like the discourses of our Lord and His Apostles, to fortuitous assemblages in street or market-place or field ; but what their themes were appears from their Confessions, such as Hamil-

(2) the rediscovery of the Evangel.

¹ *History of the Reformation*, p. 6.

² *History of the Church of Scotland*, i. 124.

ton's known as *Patrick's Places* and Knox's Book of Common Order, and even more impressively from their songs of praise. They were the glorious truths of the New Testament Evangel—the Incarnation and the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ and salvation free and full by repentance and faith—enforced by constant appeal to an open Bible. Here, for example, are two stanzas of one of *The Gude and Godlie Ballates* entitled “Of the greit loving and blythnes of Goddis word”:

“ Our Saviour and Governour
 Is Christ, quhais bludie woundis wyde
 Redemit hes from all distres,
 Sinneris that will on him confide.
 To him be gloir for ever moir
 To us quhilk hes ane promeis maid :
 Us to convoy from paine to joy,
 Baith in our lyfe and in our deid.

“ We hope and traist, the Haly Gaist
 Sall not forzet us in our neid :
 Sa we thy Word with one accord
 Hald in our hart our saull to feid.
 Let us not mis thy gloir and blis,
 Quhen fra this wretchit lyfe we wend :
 Grant us thy grace to die in peace,
 And perseveir unto the end.”

And here is another of the *Ballates* :

“ We suld into remembrance
 Of Jesus Christ our King,
 Without ony dissimulance
 Be blyith, and myrrie sing.

We war condampnit to the deid,
 In hell, for Adamis mis :
 Bot Jesus Christ the peice hes maid
 Betwix God and us.

Christ is our God and Saviour,
 Our help and our refuge :
 Our Brother and our Mediatour,
 Our Advocate and Judge.

Sen on our syde is God him sell,
 Quha dar againe him pleid ?
 For he hes vincust sin and hell,
 The Devill, and also deid.

This greit gudnes that Christ hes done,
 God let us never forzet :
 Bot thank and love that Lord abone,
 With sangis sweetly set."

Here lay the power of those preachers of the Reformation. They had discovered the long-forgotten Gospel of the redeeming love of God in Christ, and they proclaimed it out of their own glad experience of its efficacy ; and their hearers recognised it as the satisfaction of the sore hunger of their immortal souls. There is a moving picture of its gracious working in the story of George Wishart, that learned Scottish gentleman, a disciple of Calvin and a teacher of Knox, who, when Patrick Hamilton's voice was silenced in the flames, took up his message and continued its proclamation until he too perished at the stake in the year 1546. He

visited the Ayrshire town of Mauchline, and was debarred by the Sheriff from the parish Church. The people, led by Hew Campbell, the laird of Kingzeancleuch, were minded to force an entrance ; but, says Knox,¹ Wishart “ withdrew the said Hew, and said unto him, ‘ Brother, Christ Jesus is as potent upon the fields as in the kirk ; and I find that himself oftener preached in the desert, at the seaside, and other places judged profane, than he did in the temple of Jerusalem. It is the word of peace, which God sends by me : the blood of no man shall be shed this day for the preaching of it.’ And so, withdrawing the whole people, he came to a dyke in a muir edge, upon the south-west side of Mauchlin, upon the which he ascended. The whole multitude stood and sat about him, God gave the day pleasing and hot, he continued in preaching more nor three hours. In that sermon God wrought so wonderfully with him, that one of the most wicked men in that country, named Laurence Ranckin, laird of Scheill, was converted. The tears ran from his eyes in such abundance that all men marvelled ; his conversion was without hypocrisie, for his life and conversation witnessed it in all times to come.”

¹ *History of the Reformation*, pp. 43 f.

What happened at the Reformation has happened again and again. It was preaching that under God made the Reformation ; and preaching has been His instrument as often as, in the long course of the Church's history, it has pleased Him to quicken and inspire her. So it has always been, and so it will always be ; for preaching is an evangelical necessity. It is commonly alleged that not only has preaching now lost its efficacy but the pulpit is now an obsolete institution. It was indeed needful once when knowledge was less widely diffused and the preacher was the sole popular instructor ; but now that education is universal and information so easily accessible in books and periodicals, his office is superseded. Unquestionably there is a measure of justice in the contention. The increase of general knowledge has rendered the office of every public teacher, and not least the preacher's, more difficult and exacting, and exposed him, where he is incompetent, to criticism and contempt ; but it has in no wise abrogated his function. On the contrary, it has opened to him a larger and nobler opportunity, and presents him continually with an inspiring challenge. Preaching is in truth an abiding necessity. It is not obsolete ; it never will

Preach-
ing an
evan-
gelical
necessity.

and never can be obsolete. For its *raison d'être* is nothing less than a profound principle of the divine order of the world.

The principle is this—that *God never acts upon men directly, but always through a human personality.*

God touches men through men :
(1) Physical generation.

It is a universal law ; and its operation appears, in the first instance, in the mystery of physical generation. “ How wonderfully,” wrote Thomas Erskine of Linlathen almost a century ago,¹ “ God connects man with man ! He could make all men by direct acts of separate creation, but He makes one the channel of being to another. . . . This order in Providence is just a call to love. He makes us fellow-workers with Himself.” God is the fountain of life, but the stream flows through human channels.

(2) Intellectual quickening.
Job xxxiii. 8.

Think again of intellectual quickening. It was written of old that “ there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding ” ; but the inspiration is never directly communicated. It is indeed from God, but it passes from man to man. One man’s spirit is quickened by the heavenly breath, and he breathes upon others,

¹ *Letters*, p. 144 (letter to Miss Rachel Erskine, 9th October 1828).

and thus their spirits are quickened too. Here lies the teacher's golden opportunity, in truth the very *raison d'être* of his office. Is there any true scholar who does not gratefully confess his debt to some revered teacher, like the disciples of Pythagoras when they put their master's name to the books they wrote, thus acknowledging that they owed him all their wisdom? ¹ *Quod spiro et placeo, si placeo, tuum est.* A generation ago, in the days when the Scottish Free Church held so honourable a place in the domain of sacred learning, it was constantly remarked that, while the New College, Edinburgh, produced Old Testament scholars, it was New Testament scholars that came from the sister College at Glasgow. And the reason was that the Edinburgh students were privileged to sit at the feet of that brilliant Orientalist "Rabbi" Davidson, while their *confrères* in the west enjoyed the equal privilege of listening to that rare master of the New Testament Scriptures, the late Professor A. B. Bruce, and were, moreover, instructed at the University in the Greek language and literature by the celebrated Jebb.

The efficacy lies in the human personality.

¹ Iamblichus, *De Pythagorica Vita*, 196. Cf. *Ægid. Menag. Observ. in Diog. Laert.* viii. 15.

The
Written
and the
Spoken
Word.

Here is the reason why, in these days when books are multiplied and every department of study has its printed manuals, the ancient method of lecturing still obtains. There is in truth no other way of teaching. There is wisdom in books ; and, as Milton has it,¹ “ a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm’d and treasur’d up on purpose to a life beyond life.” But a book is not a teacher. For, as Plato’s Socrates observed long ago in discoursing of the Written and the Spoken Word,² “ writing is like painting. The painter’s creations stand as though alive ; but if you ask any question, they maintain a dignified silence. And it is the same with written words. You might fancy they have sense ; but if you question any statement with a desire to learn, it signifies always one and the same thing, and nothing else.” The efficacy lies not in the words but in the living thought and the soul that utters it ; and the difference between the best of books and a true teacher is like the difference between a page of music and the song from breathing lips and a heart that feels its passion.

(3) Spir-
itual
quicken-
ing.

And, once again, think of spiritual quickening. Here, too, the principle operates.

¹ *Areopagitica*, p. 6 (Hales).

² *Phædr.* 275.

Wherever in the course of history God's voice has stirred the world, He has always raised up a man. Revert to the Reformation. It was nothing else than an evangelical revival, the deepest and widest-spread that the Church has ever experienced. And there would have been no Reformation in Germany without Martin Luther ; there would have been none in Switzerland without John Calvin ; there would have been none in Scotland without John Knox. Everywhere it was the Reformer who, under God, made the Reformation : would that in those days of the Lord's right hand a St. Patrick had arisen in Ireland ! Then surely had the darkest pages of her history been written in brighter characters, and she had been spared her long sorrow. Or take the eighteenth century revival in England. It had its George Whitfield and its Wesleys. It spread like the breath of spring across the Border and broke up the dreary winter of Moderatism. It was the evangelical movement thus inaugurated that issued in the Disruption of the Scottish Church, that historic testimony to Christ's Crown and Covenant ; and there would have been no Disruption had there been no Thomas Chalmers. Afterwards it was D. L. Moody who, under God, made the

Evidence
of history.

memorable revival which stirred two continents in the later years of last century.

Individual
experience.

Look where you may, you perceive how, when God would move the world, He raises up a man ; and the principle operates no less in the spiritual experience of the individual. What was it that first inclined your heart and mine to the Blessed Saviour ? It was neither a voice from heaven nor solitary thought ; rather was it the contact of our souls with some other dear and gracious—father or mother, brother or sister, teacher or friend. It is always a human personality that moves men and awakens them to their need of God ; and here lies the *raison d'être* of the office of the Holy Ministry. God needs His human witnesses that He may reach human hearts.

Rom. x.
14.

“ How shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ? and how shall they preach, except they be sent ? ” It is the human personality that avails, and apart from the messenger the message is powerless. “ Blessed influence,” says George Eliot,¹ “ of one true loving human soul on another ! Not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the

¹ *Scenes of Clerical Life*, “ Janet’s Repentance,” ch. xix.

hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened, and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf, and glowing tasselled flower. Ideas are often poor ghosts ; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them ; they pass athwart us in thin vapour, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh ; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones ; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame."

And here we are confronted by the supreme exemplification of the principle. Here is the philosophy of the Incarnation. That the Eternal Word might reach the children of men, He must needs "become flesh and dwell among them," must grasp them with a human hand, look upon them with human eyes, and appeal to them with a human voice,

"Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here !
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself !
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee !'"

The
philo-
sophy
of the
Incarna-
tion.

And thus the reason of preaching lies at once in the providential order and in the constitution of our nature. It is both a divine and a human necessity, since only through a human medium is man accessible to God or God intelligible to man.

ANTECEDENTS OF CHRISTIAN PREACHING

I. JEWISH PREACHING

“ In the ancient Prophet, going to and fro, sometimes naked, sometimes wrapt in his hairy cloak, chanting his wild melodies, or dramatising his own message, always strange and exceptional—in the ancient Priest, deriving his sanctity from his clothes, with his strong arms imbrued, like a butcher’s, in the blood of a cow or a sheep, no one would recognise the religious ministers of any civilised country for the last eighteen centuries. But in the Scribe, poring over the sacred volume, or reading and enforcing it from his lofty platform, or explaining it to the small knots of ‘those that had understanding,’ and gathered round him for instruction, there is an unmistakeable likeness to the religious teachers of all the various forms which have arisen out of the Judaism of Ezra and Nehemiah.”

DEAN STANLEY.

ANTECEDENTS OF CHRISTIAN PREACHING

I. JEWISH PREACHING

IT is significant that there is no Christian institution which was, at its foundation, an absolutely novel invention. All antecedent history, especially the history of Israel—that unique unfolding of God's redemptive purpose—was a *præparatio Evangelii*, and our Lord's work was its fulfilment ; and whatsoever was good and true and beautiful in heathendom He recognised as an unconscious yearning after Himself, and every Jewish ordinance as a providential foreshadowing of His ministry. He came not to destroy but to fulfil, and His ordinances are all ancient institutions transfigured by His larger revelation and invested with a nobler and richer significance. So it appears in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is the fulfilment of Israel's Passover, and in the Sacrament of Baptism, which is the fulfilment of the Jewish ritual of ablution.

Preaching not a Christian invention.

Mt. v. 17.

And it appears also in the Christian institution of Preaching. This is an ancient method. It prevailed among Jews and Gentiles alike ; and it will help us to appreciate the Christian institution if we acquaint ourselves with its prechristian antecedents.

Hebrew
pro-
phesy.

First, then, let us consider Jewish Preaching. Its earliest and also its grandest representatives are the Hebrew Prophets. And what was "prophecy" in ancient Israel? Much misconception has resulted from the unfortunate idea that the term is synonymous with "prediction," according to Bishop Butler's statement¹ that "prophecy is nothing but the history of events before they come to pass." This is the general use of the term in modern English ; and it had established itself as early as the time of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who defines the verb "to prophesy" as "to predict, to foretell, to prognosticate"; "a prophet" as "a predictor, a foreteller"; and "prophecy" as "foreseeing or foretelling future events." In truth this is precisely what Hebrew prophecy was not. Consider the original terminology.

Nabi"

The Hebrew word for "prophet" is *nabi*", and its proper signification is undetermined.

¹ *Analogy*, II. vii. p. 294.

Gesenius, followed by Kuenen, derived it from a root signifying "to bubble up" or "overflow"; and thus a prophet would be a man surcharged with a divine afflatus, and prophecy the outwelling of his soul. This has, however, been disputed, and nowadays the word is referred rather to an Arabic root, whether *naba'a*, "tell," *nab'at*, "a gentle sound" or "whisper." Thus a prophet would mean properly either "a speaker," "a herald" of God, or one to whom God has "whispered" His secret, the recipient of a divine revelation.¹

And what of the Greek word *prophetes*? *Prophetes*. According to the use of the preposition *pro* in compounds it may denote (1) one who "speaks beforehand," or (2) one who "speaks in public," or (3) one who "speaks on behalf of another"; that is, either "a foreteller" or "a forth-teller" or "a for-teller."² The last is certainly its meaning in the present connection; and it is so defined by Pindar in his invocation: "Utter thine oracle, O Muse, and I will prophesy";³ and again by Sextus Empiricus,⁴ the Sceptic philosopher

¹ Cf. Robertson Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 390 f.

² Cf. Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. p. 355.

³ Fragm. 15 (115): *μαντεύσομαι, Μοῖσα, προφατεύσω δ' ἐγώ*.

⁴ *Adv. Gramm.* i. 279.

about the close of the second century of our era, when he designates exegesis "the prophetess of the poets." What the poet was to the Muse when he uttered the inspired thought, and what the exegete was to the poet when he interpreted the mystic verse, that the prophet was to God: he was God's spokesman and interpreter.

God's
spokes-
man.

iv. 14, 15.

And precisely this, whatever be the etymology of the term, is the scriptural conception of the Hebrew *nabi*'. Thus it is written in the Book of Exodus that, when Moses would have declined the commission to confront Pharaoh and demand the release of the Israelites, on the pretext that he was "not eloquent" but "slow of speech and of a slow tongue," the Lord answered: "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well.

vii. 1.

. . . And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth." And then it is written further that "the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." What God was to man, that Moses was to Pharaoh; and what a prophet was to God, Aaron was to Moses. Aaron was Moses' spokesman, uttering the words which Moses had put in his mouth; and so a prophet

was God's spokesman, inspired by His spirit and interpreting His mind and will.

And what was it that made a man a prophet? ^{Two-} It was his knowledge of God's character and ^{pro-} purpose. And how was this attained? ^{phetic} It was indeed a revelation, but it came not by a ^{convic-} voice from heaven but by the play of two ^{tions.} steadfast convictions in the prophet's soul, both born of experience. One was a recognition of the Divine Righteousness and its corollary—the moral order of the world. Isaiah has thus tersely expressed it: "Say ^{iii. 10,} ye of the righteous, that it shall be well with ^{ii.} him: for they shall eat of the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Wherever, in men or in nations, the prophet beheld unrighteousness, he perceived there the wrath of God and proclaimed the certainty of doom. And his other conviction was an assurance of the Divine Mercy; and on the strength thereof, wherever he proclaimed the inevitable judgment of unrighteousness, he proclaimed also the certainty of forgiveness, if only sinners would repent and turn from their evil ways.

Those two convictions were born of experience in the prophet's breast—not merely his ^{Pro-} ^{phetic} ^{appeal to} ^{history.}

personal experience but his observation of the Lord's providential dealings with the children of men. And so the appeal to history was continually on his lips. "Remember this, and shew yourselves men : bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old : for I am God, and there is none else ; I am God, and there is none like Me ; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done ; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord ; awake, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Art not thou it that cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon ? Art not thou it which dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep ; that made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over ? " "Look at the generations of old, and see : who did ever put his trust in the Lord, and was ashamed ? Or who did abide in His fear, and was forsaken ? Or who did call upon Him, and He despised him ? "

Is. xlv.
8-10.

Is. 9, 10.

Ecclus.
ii. 10.

History
the pro-
phetic
revela-
tion of
God.

Thus the prophets made their appeal to history ; and it is hardly too much to say that history was for them the supreme revelation of God. For they saw there what God had done,

and in this they read His eternal character and His immutable purpose. It is very significant that in the Hebrew Bible the great historical books are entitled "the Former Prophets" and the prophetic books "the Latter Prophets": so far was the Hebrew mind from identifying prophecy with prediction. In truth prediction, in the sense of a definite programme of future events, belongs not to prophecy but to apocalyptic; and it is noteworthy that the apocalyptic literature of the Jews is all very late and almost entirely uncanonical. The prophets were not apocalyptists, but neither were they historians. History indeed was their supreme interest, but it was for them no mere record of the unreturning past: it was a revelation of the Eternal God, who is the Contemporary of every age; and in what He had done they read not only what He was accomplishing but what He would evermore bring to pass.

"There is a history in all men's lives,
Figuring the nature of the times deceased;
The which observed, a man may prophesy,
With a near aim, of the main chance of things
As yet not come to life, which in their seeds
And weak beginnings lie intreasured.
Such things become the hatch and brood of time."¹

¹ Shakespeare, *Henry IV* (Part 2), III. i. 80 ff.

And thus prophecy, while it meant simply “preaching”—the meaning which the English word retained down to the seventeenth century, and which appears in Jeremy Taylor’s phrase *The Liberty of Prophecy*—inevitably passed into prediction and reached out into the future in faith and hope and warning. Indeed prophecy is the only true prediction; for its soul is faith in the ever-living, ever-reigning God, and “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen.”

Heb. xi.
1.

The
Scribes
the suc-
cessors
of the
Pro-
phets.

The age of the Prophets was Israel’s golden age, and when the spirit of prophecy ceased, her glory departed. The successors of the Prophets were the Scribes, and the difference between them was briefly this—that, whereas the Prophets were spokesmen of a living faith, the Scribes were conservators of a dead tradition. History was all in all to both; but while for the Prophet it was, as we have seen, a revelation of the Eternal God and a divine message of guidance and hope, for the Scribe it was the record of a vanished past. The Prophet had faith in an ever-living, ever-present, ever-working God; the Scribe believed in a God who had wrought wonders in the days of old. For him revelation was a memory of the past. He had no sense of a

Divine Presence, no "open vision," no upward and no forward look. His eyes were turned ever backward, and while wistfully recalling how God had spoken of old time unto the fathers, he never heard nor thought to hear a living voice within his own soul. The Word of God was for him a tradition, and he was its conservator and transmitter. The spirit of prophecy had departed, and in those barren days a fresh outpouring thereof was beyond belief. The best hope was that one of the ancient prophets might arise from the dead and resume his former ministry.

Cf. Mt.
xvi. 13,
14; Mk.
viii. 27,
28; Lk.
ix. 18, 19.

It was in the age of the Scribes that our Lord appeared, and the office of preaching had then fallen very low. It had no place in the worship of the Temple at Jerusalem, which was administered by the Sadducean order of the priesthood and was limited to the mechanical performance of the sacrificial and ceremonial ritual. The office of preaching belonged to the Pharisaic order of the Scribes or Rabbis, "the teachers of Israel," who exercised their ministry in the synagogues. Their business was twofold: first, the interpretation (*midrash*) of the Written Law, which comprehended not merely the Law proper, the Five Books of Moses, but the whole of the sacred canon of

Their
preach-
ing.

Cf. Mk.
vii. 3.

the Old Testament : and, second, the preservation and development of the Unwritten Law, "the Tradition of the Elders," that enormous and ever accumulating mass of legalistic decisions and casuistical definitions known as the Talmud or "Teaching," the Rabbinical *corpus doctrinæ*.

Alle-
gorical
exegesis.

In their interpretation of the Law they followed the method of allegorical exegesis which the Neoplatonists had introduced in their handling of the Homeric Poems with the design of rationalising the ancient mythology, and which Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.—c. 50 A.D.) adopted in his attempt to construe Jewish theology in terms of Greek philosophy and thus imbue the Jews with Greek wisdom and the Greeks with Jewish religion. This they called *haggadah*, "narrative" or "legend"; and they applied it to the historical and didactic passages of the Old Testament, distinguishing between the *peshat* or literal meaning and the *sod* or mystic meaning, the latter being the deeper and truly valuable.

Ex-
amples :
(1) Philo.
Gen.
xxviii. 11.

A clear example of the allegorical method is Philo's treatment of the story of Jacob's vision at Bethel, where it is written that "he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to

sleep.”¹ First, he points out the literal interpretation, according to which the passage is “a lesson in the study of toil and endurance.” “The student of virtue should not live delicately and luxuriously, like the men called ‘fortunate’ whose whole life is a sleep and a dream, who spend the day in law-courts, council-chambers, and theatres, and at night lie down on costly couches and flowery beds.” Rather should he imitate the patriarch who lay on the ground with a stone for his pillow—“an archetypal example of a disciplined soul, an enemy to everything effeminate.” Such is the literal interpretation, but the passage has also a symbolic meaning. “You must know that the divine place and the holy ground is full of incorporeal Words, and these Words are immortal souls. It is one of these Words that Jacob takes, choosing the upmost in excellence, and puts nigh his head, that is, his mind, which is in a manner the head of the soul. And he does this ostensibly to fall on sleep but in truth to repose upon a divine Word and lay thereon his whole life, even his lightest burden.”

St. Paul had been trained in the school of ^{(2) St. Paul.} the Scribes and accustomed to their methods.

¹ *De Somniis*, i. pp. 56 ff. (Pfeiffer), pp. 639 f. (Mangey).

He attained subsequently to a larger understanding of the Scriptures ; but the lessons of youth are hard to unlearn, and in his epistles he frequently reverts to the manner which he had learned at the feet of Gamaliel. Think,

iv. 21-31. Judaisers in the Epistle to the Galatians he allegorises the story of Abraham and his two wives, Sarah and Hagar, and their sons, Isaac and Ishmael, making the bondwoman a symbol of the Law and the free woman a symbol of the Gospel. Again, he allegorises that humane precept of the Mosaic Law : “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn,” making it an assertion of the preacher’s right to maintenance. This is the very manner of the Scribes ; but it should be observed that it is not the Apostle’s proper manner. Wherever he employs it, he is writing playfully, borrowing the familiar method of his opponents and, as it were, turning their own weapons against them.

Dt. xxv.
4 ; 1 Cor.
ix. 8-12 ;
1 Tim.
v. 18.

A mis-
chievous
method.

In the hands of the celebrated Rabbis and Philo and, by and by, Christian teachers like Origen, the allegorical method was a *tour de force* of sanctified imagination, and it served a valuable use for both edification and apologetic ere the rise of the modern science of Historical

Criticism. But these were able men, and the Scribes were not all able men. They were commonly dull souls without nimble fancy, or else extravagant and grotesque in their imaginations. The latter sort were especially mischievous—"giddy spirits" who "turned everything to allegory, making men out of dogs and angels out of trees and bringing the whole of Scripture to ridicule."¹

To the Scribes, as we have seen, belonged the office of preaching in the synagogues; and though none of their sermons have survived, evidences of the style of their preaching are not lacking.² The service began with the recitation of a set of passages called the *Shema* or "Hear" from the opening sentence "Hear, O Israel." It was a solemn call to worship. Then followed prayer; and after that the Scripture lessons—a passage from the Law and another from the Prophets, which included the historical books, "the Former Prophets." There was a prescribed lectionary, and it was so arranged that the Pentateuch was read through every three years. This office was called "the Reading of the Law and the Prophets," and it was followed by the sermon

The
worship
of the
Syna-
gogue.

Dt. vi.
4-9,
xi. 13-21;
Nu. xv.
37-41.

Cf. Acts
xiii. 15.

¹ Calvin on 1 Cor. ix. 8.

² Schürer, *Jewish People*, II. ii. pp. 75 ff.

—an exposition (*d'rashah*) of some portion of the lessons. The preacher occupied a somewhat elevated dais, and after the reading of the lessons the sacred volume or roll was handed to him. In token of reverence he stood and, unfolding it, read the passage which he would expound, and then resumed his seat and sat while he discoursed.

Cf. Lk.
iv. 16,
17, 20.

Tradition-
alism.

The quality of the discourse has already appeared. The text was interpreted allegorically, and the homily was no proclamation of high spiritual truths but a repetition of Rabbinical commonplaces. In a Jewish teacher originality was an offence, and no Scribe would have presumed to emulate the Prophets by declaring a message out of the fulness of his own soul. It is told ¹ how once at a Rabbinical conference after much discussion of a difficult question appeal was made to R. Hillel. He pronounced his judgment and supported it by argument; but his reasoning carried no conviction, since he alleged no authority and "law without traditional authority is no law." At length he said: "It occurs to me that I heard from Shemaiah and Abtalion," and this determined the question: they arose and appointed him their President (*nasi*). That

¹ Taylor, *Sayings of the Fathers*, p. 20, note 26.

was the manner of a Jewish teacher. He was a servile traditionalist, and introduced his every doctrine with the preface: "Rabbi So-and-so said."

The Ruler of the Synagogue was responsible for the ordering of the service. He selected the preacher; and it was customary that, when a qualified stranger appeared, he should be invited to deliver the sermon. Thus it came to pass that our Lord, like St. Paul afterwards, so often "taught in the synagogues" during His Galilean ministry; and it is no wonder that His preaching surprised His hearers: it was so unlike the preaching to which they were accustomed. Remember the story of His first appearance in the synagogue of Capernaum. "Straightway on the Sabbath Day He entered into the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching." And what was it that astonished them? It was this—that "He taught them as one having authority, and not as their Scribes." He had authority; He quoted none, neither Rabbi nor Scripture. He indeed quoted Scripture, but always that He might indicate the imperfection of the ancient order and illustrate the larger revelation which He had brought. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of

The contrast of our Lord's teaching. Cf. Ac. xiii. 15.

Mk. i. 21; cf. Mt. vii. 28, 29.

old time . . . ; but I say unto you." No wonder they were astonished. "What is this?" they exclaimed. "A new teaching!" It was more than a revival of the ancient spirit of prophecy. The prophets also had spoken with authority; but theirs was the authority of men to whom God had spoken, our Lord's was the authority of God Himself.

ANTECEDENTS OF CHRISTIAN PREACHING

II. GREEK RHETORIC

“ Of old, in the temple, there was kept—said the rabbins—a flute of reed, plain and straight and simple, but of marvellous sweetness. It came down from Moses’ day. But the king commanded his goldsmiths to cover and adorn it with gold and gems. And, lo, the sweetness of the reed flute was forever gone ! ”

S. W. DUFFIELD.

ANTECEDENTS OF CHRISTIAN PREACHING

II. GREEK RHETORIC

IN the period with which we have now to do Greece, once the queen of the world, was Rome's vassal. Nevertheless she held a unique supremacy. She had been robbed of her freedom, but in her magnificent literature she retained an inalienable and peerless heritage ; and, excluded from the fields of politics and arms, she cultivated that and made herself the teacher of the nations, their intellectual mistress, subjugating in a nobler contest even her imperial conqueror.

Con-
quered
Greece
the
teacher
of the
world.

“ Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes
Intulit agresti Latio.”¹

It was no mere contemporary triumph : it was a conquest of future ages. For she instituted the system of education which thenceforward shaped human civilisation and which persisted unaltered through the long Middle Ages

¹ Hor. *Epist.* II. i. 156 f.

and is only now being tentatively and perhaps too often blunderingly modified in response to the larger and more varied requirements of modern times. It is to conquered Greece that the world owes its Grammar Schools and Universities.

Greek
educa-
tion :

As it was practised by the Greeks, a complete education (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία) embraced three departments, the mediæval *trivium*, enumerated and defined in the mnemonic verse :

Gramm. loquitur ; *Dia.* vera docet ; *Rhet.* verba colorat."

1. Gram-
matic.

I. Grammatic (γραμματική). This signified not "grammar" in the modern sense but rather "literature," and its teachers were styled "grammatics" (γραμματικοί) or *littérateurs*. What we call "grammar" was "grammaticistic" (γραμματιστική), and its teachers, the "grammatists" (γραμματισταί), were much humbler personages than the grammatics. The latter corresponded to our Professors of Literature. Their business was the study of the classic masters, especially the poets ; and these they treated from three points of view : that of style, indicating excellences and defects and elaborating canons of literary taste ; that of antiquities, explain-

ing mythology and history; and that of exegesis, which included not merely the elucidation of the author's meaning but the discussion of variant readings and the authenticity of the works.¹ The study of literature was the foundation of a liberal education, and there was a school of literature in every considerable town.

2. Dialectic (*διαλεκτική*). That was an age of criticism, and Dialectic had succeeded to Philosophy. Dialectic is to Philosophy very much what Theology is to Revelation. Philosophy is thought, a quest after truth; and Dialectic is the science of thought, an analysis of its laws, and a directory for its right conduct. It defines the methods of reasoning in order to the detection and avoidance of fallacies. It is, as Suidas puts it, "the science of things that are true and things that are false and things that are neither."² 2. Dialectic.

Dialectic was indeed a valuable discipline, indispensable as a preparation for the business of the law-court and the Senate and useful for the common intercourse of daily life, since it sharpened men's wits, making them nimble in retort and quick in detecting deceptions. Petty quibbling.

¹ Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages*, pp. 29 f.

But it was apt to breed a spirit of petty disputatiousness and intellectual conceit ; and Epictetus frequently warns his students against the shallow and offensive foible of making a pedantic display of dialectical acumen by plying their neighbours with " hypothetical arguments," mentioning one who attended the class of Dialectic in order that by and by, when he entered public life, he might win applause by posing with his quibbles some simple magistrate who had the misfortune to sit beside him at an official symposium.¹

3. Rhetoric.

3. Rhetoric (ῥητορική). There is no instrument so powerful as eloquence in swaying the minds of men, kindling their enthusiasm, and determining their actions. Even in the modern world, where the Written Word has so free a course, the Spoken retains, on the lips of " a master of assemblies," a unique efficacy. And much more in ancient days, when books were rare and newspapers were unknown. The living voice was then the only appeal, and an orator was truly, in the phrase of Demosthenes, " a leader and captain." Greece was always the home of eloquence. Her people were a race of talkers. Oratory was their delight, and in the days of their

¹ *Dissert.* I. xxvi. 9.

greatness it was always their orators that shaped the national course for good or for ill. Hence it was natural that in later days, the age of criticism, there should arise a new science—the art of oratory. Oratory was *rhetoireia*, and an orator *rhetor*; and so the science of oratory was “rhetoric” (ῥητορικὴ) and its practitioner “a rhetorician” (ῥητορικός).

Rhetoric was the crown of a liberal education. The Grammatic and Dialectic were merely preliminary disciplines, and Rhetoric carried these to their practical issue. Grammatic imbued the student with the wisdom of the past and developed his literary aptitudes; Dialectic trained his reasoning powers; and Rhetoric taught him to turn his equipment to account, especially in the law-court and the Senate, by instructing him in the art of ready utterance, appropriate expression, and moving appeal. In itself the term signified little else than Elocution; but, implying as it did a preliminary training in Literature and Philosophy, it meant much more, being actually synonymous with “Sophistic,” which Philostratus¹ defines as “Rhetoric philosophising.” Rhetoric and Sophistic were convertible

The crown of a liberal education.

¹ *De Vit. Soph., proœm.*

terms.¹ A rhetorician and a sophist were one and the same.

Method
of teach-
ing :

The method of teaching Rhetoric may be defined as threefold : (1) precept, (2) example, and (3) practice.

(1) Pre-
cept.

(1) It began with precept; and here the professor dictated to his class the rules of oratory, illustrating these by reference to the classic models.

(2) Ex-
ample.

(2) Then came example. Here the professor might recite—never read, since free delivery was a rhetorical requirement—a classic passage with fitting gesture and intonation to show how the thing should be done. Generally, however, he preferred to deliver an oration of his own. Sometimes his theme would be an historical situation lending itself to fanciful elaboration; and Philostratus in his *Lives of the Sophists* quotes several examples. One is : “ Demosthenes abjuring the charge of accepting the bribe of fifty talents which Demades brought against him ”; and another : “ The wounded in the Athenian defeat at Syracuse beseeching their retiring comrades to put them to death.”² This sort

¹ Cf. Socr. *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 46 : ἀμφοτέροι [οἱ Ἀπολινάριοι] δὲ ἦσαν Ἑλληνικῶν λόγων διδάσκαλοι· γραμματικῶν μὲν ὁ πᾶτηρ, ῥητορικῶν δὲ ὁ υἱός. iii. 16 : ἐπιστήμονες λόγων, ὁ μὲν πᾶτηρ γραμματικῶν, σοφιστικῶν δὲ ὁ υἱός.

² I. xxv. 7, II. v. 3.

of rhetorical theme has a peculiar and abiding interest inasmuch as it is a forerunner of the modern "historical novel." More congenial, however, were purely imaginary themes, which afforded the rhetorician opportunity for a dazzling display of subtle casuistry and audacious paradox; and Lucian has provided a complete example in his *Tyrannicide*—a rhetorical disquisition before an imaginary tribunal on the following thesis: "A man went up to the Acropolis to slay the tyrant. He did not find the tyrant but slew his son and left the sword in his body. The tyrant came, saw his son lying dead, and slew himself with the sword. The man who went and slew the tyrant's son, claims reward as a tyrannicide."

(3) After they had been thus instructed by ⁽³⁾ precept and example the students were required to practise what they had learned. The simplest exercise was an essay in recitation and criticism. A classical passage was prescribed, and a student was called up and required first to recite it and then apply to it the rules of rhetoric. Thereafter he resumed his seat and the professor commented on his performance for the benefit of the class. In a lecture where he deals caustically with the

Practice.

Exercises in recitation and criticism.

common fault of "reading and disputing for mere display" Epictetus quotes by way of warning a trivial and pedantic criticism which had just been delivered before him.¹ The prescribed passage was Xenophon's narrative of the trial of Socrates at the beginning of the *Memorabilia*. The opening sentence runs: "I have often wondered on what possible grounds (τίσιν ποτὲ λόγοις)"; and here the student had taken exception to the phrase "on what possible grounds," preferring the singular number—"on what possible ground (τίνι ποτὲ λόγῳ)," and remarking, "This is smoother." The professor drops upon him heavily. Such criticism might apply to silly verses, but it is intolerable in dealing with this august narrative. "Had you read it as you ought, you would not have concerned yourself with that sort of thing. No, you would rather have noticed sentences like this: 'Anytus and Miletus can kill me, but they cannot harm me'; or this: 'It is always my disposition to heed nothing of my own save the argument which on consideration appears to me the best.'"

"Ex-temporaneous discourses."

A harder exercise was the prescription of a theme to a student with the requirement that

¹ *Dissert.* III. xxiii. 20 f.

he should deliver an original discourse upon it. Sometimes the theme was prescribed beforehand, and he had time to prepare his discourse, commit it to memory, and practise its delivery; but the hardest ordeal was the prescription of a theme and the requirement of a discourse on the spot without premeditation. And it was indeed a valuable discipline, qualifying the student for the golden opportunities which would confront him in his career as a pleader or a statesman—those sudden emergencies when success depends on quick perception of the issue and promptitude in uttering the needful word. The development of this aptitude was the supreme end of the study of rhetoric, and its professors delighted to display their prowess. They would challenge each other to “contests” (ἀγῶνες),¹ and invite audiences to admire their “extemporaneous discourses” (αὐτοσχεδίους λόγους), promising to expatiate on any theme which might be proposed;² and amusing anecdotes are told of their ingenuity in determining the choice of a theme to their liking or switching

¹ Cf. Philostr. *De Vit. Soph.* I. xx. 2, II. i. 15. Thucydides had the rhetoricians in view when he claimed (i. 22) that his history was “a possession for ever rather than the rhetorical triumph of an hour” (Jebb), κτήμα ἐς αἰὲ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα.

² Philostr. II. v. 3, x. i.

off on a familiar line and thus pouring forth, as though impromptu, a flood of practised oratory.

Modern
survivals
of the
schools
of rhet-
oric :

The rhetoricians enjoyed enormous prestige. Rhetoric was the principal or at all events the favourite study in the numerous colleges which arose in that period, such as the Athenaion at Athens, the Mouseion at Alexandria, and others hardly, if at all, less famous at Tarsus, Ephesus, Smyrna, Nicopolis, Marseilles, and elsewhere—the parents of those august and beneficent institutions which we still possess and which ever since the Middle Ages have borne the name of “Universities.” And here it is worth observing, both as an antiquarian curiosity and as an evidence of this historical connection, that several of the academic terms still in use originated in the ancient Greek schools.

(1) The
title
“Pro-
fessor.”

First there is the title “Professor”; and it had a somewhat discreditable origin. It is derived directly from the Latin *profiteri*, “profess,” which came to be used absolutely, with no express object, in a technical sense: “to profess” meant “to teach rhetoric.”¹ The Greek equivalent was *ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι*.

¹ Cf. Pliny, *Epist.* iv. xi.: “Audistine Valerium Lucinianum in Sicilia profiteri? . . . nunc eo decidit ut exul de senatore, rhetor de oratore fieret.”

Signifying properly "to promise," *ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι* was used in the sense of "candidating for an office," inasmuch as candidates, in order to win votes, made lavish promises of zealous service should they be elected.¹ And precisely similar was the manner of the rhetoricians. They were accustomed, in order to secure large audiences, to advertise their oratorical displays; and since there were no newspapers in those days, they would send round invitations either in writing or by word of mouth: "Come and hear my prelections"; "Come and hear me reading to you"; "Hear me to-day discoursing in the house of Quadratus."² This was called "promising a recitation";³ and so "to promise" came to mean "to be a teacher of rhetoric," and the rhetorician was styled "the promiser" (*ὁ ἐπαγγελλόμενος*)—"the professor." Epictetus pours contempt on the fashion. "The carpenter," he says in one place,⁴ "does not come and say: 'Hear me discoursing about carpentry.' No, he takes a contract for a house, and constructs it, and thus shows that he has the art." And again:⁵ "A philosopher invites to a recita-

¹ Cf. Moulton and Milligan, *Vocab. of Greek Test.*

² Epict. *Dissert.* III. xxi. 6, xxiii. 6, 23.

³ *ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι ἀκρόασιν.* So perhaps in 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

⁴ III. xxi. 4.

⁵ III. xxiii. 27.

tion ! What manner of physician is he who invites one to be treated by him ? ”

(2) The
academ-
ic gown.

Our professor's gown is another ancient relic. The rhetorician wore a robe (στόλιον) after the example of the old philosopher's threadbare cloak (τρίβων). This latter was a serviceable attire suited for all weathers, and it had truly betokened the wearer's poverty and the austerity of his life ; and the rhetoricians, like the mediæval monks after them, imitated the fashion of the philosophers but belied its spirit. The professor's gown was generally a fine robe, but occasionally it was a poor thing, an exaggeration of the philosopher's sorry mantle—not merely a τρίβων but a τριβωνάριον. And in either case it was ostentatiously paraded. Sometimes he would invest himself ere entering the lecture-hall and facing his audience ; and Epictetus portrays him “ ascending the pulpit in a neat robe or a poor threadbare cloak ” and delivering an oration on the death of Achilles.¹ Sometimes he comported himself still more impressively. In one of his epistles² the Younger Pliny gives an enthusiastic account of a performance of that celebrated rhetorician of Athens, Isæus the Assyrian, who visited

¹ III. xxiii. 35.

² II. iii.

Rome about the year 97 A.D. After a graceful and thrilling prelude he requested the audience to propose "several controversies" and decide which he should take as his theme. Then "he rose, robed himself, and began (*surgit, amicitur, incipit*)," pouring forth a tide of that brilliant and elaborate declamation which occasioned a proverbial description of ready speech—*sermo promptus et Isæo torrentior*, "a flood of words surpassing Isæus."¹ Probably his pausing to robe himself in view of his audience ere he began was more than an impressive piece of play-acting: it was an astute device for procuring himself a brief space to collect his thoughts and consider how he might best, after his wont, work something of his large store of studied eloquence into his professedly extemporaneous effusion.²

Again, it is to the Greek schools that we owe the term "chair" as denoting not the actual seat which a professor occupies, but the office which he discharges. Thus we speak of a professor as holding a particular "chair"—the Chair of Theology, the Chair of Church History, the Chair of Old or New Testament Exegesis. The Greek term was *θρόνος*, and it was used in precisely the same way. Thus

(3) The professor's "chair."

¹ Juv. iii. 73 f.

² Cf. Philostr. *De Vit. Soph.* i. xx. 2.

it is recorded of the rhetorician Theodotus that "he lived to be over fifty, and held his chair for two years."¹

4. "Faculty."

And so the term "faculty," signifying a particular department of learning in a University, as the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Divinity, the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Engineering. "Faculty" is here the Latin *facultas*, and it represents the Greek *δύναμις* which, already used by Aristotle² of a special art, was invested in the Greek schools with the technical signification which it still bears.³

Allurements to the study of rhetoric :

(1) A lucrative profession.

It was inevitable that, irrespective of the Greek fondness for oratory, the rhetoricians should wield a vast influence and attract an eager throng of students to their lecture-halls ; and that for two special reasons. One is that a professor of rhetoric occupied a distinguished and lucrative position, perhaps in those days the most distinguished and lucrative in the world. The chairs of rhetoric were richly endowed. The Emperor Vespasian (69-79 A.D.) assigned to the professors at Rome an annual salary of 100,000 sesterces or about £1000 from the imperial exchequer ; and his

¹ Cf. Philostr. *De Vit. Soph.* i. ii.

² *Met.* iv. 12 ; viii. 2.

³ Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages*, p. 44.

example was followed elsewhere by his successors, especially Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius who enlarged the four colleges at Athens and handsomely endowed them. A chair of rhetoric was thus a prize. Of course, many though there were, the number of chairs was limited; yet there was always the chance of an appointment, and in any case a rhetorician could win a large emolument by travelling hither and thither and delivering courses of lectures. Moreover, the recognised teachers enjoyed not a few profitable advantages. For example, they were exempted from the heavy burden of taxation, both municipal and imperial. And they were frequently employed to deliver orations on public occasions or to conduct foreign embassies, and in case of distinguished service they were made senators or appointed to provincial governorships.¹ A profession which presented such prospects was naturally attractive; and it is no wonder that young men of ambition devoted themselves to it and crowded the classrooms of the rhetoricians.

And not only did the profession of rhetoric present an alluring career but the study was essential to success in other professions. It

(2) A necessary training for any public career.

¹ Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages*, pp. 38 ff., 97 f.

was a necessary training for an advocate,¹ a statesman, or a magistrate ; and every young man who contemplated any sort of public career attended a school of rhetoric.

The
Christian
Church
and
Greek
Rhetoric.

An alien
art in
Palestine.

And now we come to the question of the relation between the Christian Church and Greek Rhetoric. So long as the Apostles remained in Palestine, the question never arose ; for rhetoric was there an alien thing and, like other heathen institutions, it was held in ill repute. It could not indeed be entirely excluded, since the Roman domination necessitated its practice in the conduct of legal and political affairs ; but no devout Jew would profess it, and it is significant that, when the representatives of the Sanhedrin, including the High Priest and several Rabbis, went from Jerusalem to Cæsarea to prosecute their indictment of St. Paul before the Governor Felix, none of them was qualified to present the case. And so they employed "an orator, one Tertullus." It appears indeed that he was a Jew, but his adulation of the tyrannical Governor proves him, in the phrase of the period, "a Helleniser," a worldly-minded conformist to heathen customs.

Ac. xxiv.
1.

¹ Hence ῥήτωρ was synonymous with συνήγορος, δικολόγος, *causidicus* (Suidas).

The Apostles had no need of the art of rhetoric in preaching to the people of Palestine ; but it was otherwise when they went abroad and preached to audiences accustomed to the dazzling oratory of the rhetoricians. The first to experience the difficulty was St. Paul, and it emerged acutely among his converts in the intellectual city of Corinth. He sojourned there for a year and a half (Sept. 51–Feb. 53) in the course of his second mission ; and his preaching, enkindled by the passion of his faith and reinforced by the power of the Spirit, was greatly successful. Yet his hearers missed in it those excellences of speech and enticements of wisdom which they loved. His bodily presence, they remarked, was weak and his speech contemptible. Even while he was in their midst they contrasted his uncouth bearing, his untutored tones, and his unadorned simplicity with the dramatic gestures, the polished eloquence, and the subtle argumentation of their rhetoricians ; and it happened that after his departure they were visited by Apollos, that brilliant Alexandrian, equally distinguished by learning and eloquence, and he won their admiration and alienated their affection.

Neces-
sary in
evangel-
ising the
Gentiles.

Cf. 1 Cor.
ii. 1–5.

2 Cor x.
10.

It was an unhappy experience for the Apostle,

Its
adop-
tion by
the
Church.

yet it served a useful end. It was the first intimation to the ambassadors of Christ that, if they would win the world, they must address to it a congenial appeal. Nor was the lesson unheeded. The Church appropriated Greek Rhetoric, and in her hands it attained a new dignity and an unprecedented glory. It is remarkable how many famous rhetoricians in the early centuries were Christians. Not the least striking example is Apollinarius, who despite his Christological heresy did much for the Faith. He was a rhetorician at Laodicea, and he was a valiant ally of St. Athanasius in the Arian controversy. Afterwards, with his father, the elder Apollinarius, who was a Grammaric or Professor of Literature, he rendered the Church a singular service. In the year 363 A.D. the apostate Emperor Julian issued a decree prohibiting the teaching or study of Greek literature by the Christians. It was truly a heavy blow to the Church, since she would thus have been reduced to illiteracy and not only exposed to contempt but deprived of the controversial weapons necessary for winning the world. "And, indeed, the Christians were put so to their shifts by this crafty means, and so much in danger to decline into all ignorance, that the two Apollinarii

were fain as a man may say to coin all the seven liberall Sciences out of the Bible, reducing it into divers forms of Orations, Poems, Dialogues, ev'n to the calculating of a new Christian Grammar." ¹ The elder executed a poetical paraphrase of the bulk of the Old Testament, rendering the Books of Moses in heroics and casting the historical books into the form of dramas; and the younger dealt in like manner with the New Testament, turning the Gospels and the Epistles into dialogues after the style of Plato. ²

Apollinarius remained a rhetorician all his days, but there were not a few who attained eminence in that profession and, hearing the heavenly call, abandoned their splendid prospects and consecrated their talents to the service of the Gospel. One of these was St. Basil. His Christian father was a rhetorician at Neocæsarea in Pontus, and he also was intended for that profession and studied at Athens, like his contemporary and fellow Cappadocian St. Gregory of Nazianzus, under the pagan master Himerius of Bithynia and the Christian Prohæresius of Armenia, and himself taught for a while at Cæsarea. But the most con-

Chris-
tian
preach-
ers
trained
in rhet-
oric.

¹ Milton, *Areopagitica*, p. 14 (Hales).

² Socr. *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 46; iii. 16.

spicuous of all is St. John Chrysostom. He was designed for the profession of rhetoric, and he studied at his native Antioch under the pagan Libanius, the most celebrated orator of the day—τὸν ἐπ' εὐγλωττία παρὰ πᾶσι βεβοημένον, as St. Isidore of Pelusium styles him—and actually practised as a pleader in the law-courts.¹ His eloquence rivalled his master's; and it is said ² that, when the latter was asked on his death-bed who would make the worthiest successor to his chair, he answered: "John, if the Christians had not stolen him."

Effect
on the
Church.

It is no exaggeration to affirm that Greek Rhetoric attained the zenith of its glory when it was appropriated by the Christian Church and consecrated to the service of the Gospel; and if evidence be required, this may suffice—that, whereas the orations of its pagan professors have perished save for a few fragments, it has its imperishable monument in the sublime eloquence of its great Christian practitioners, like St. Basil, St. Gregory, and St. Chrysostom in the East, and St. Ambrose and St. Augustine in the West. It was, indeed, a noble instrument in their hands, and the Church owes a large debt to the Greek schools

¹ Isid. Pelus. *Epist.* II. xlii.

² Sozom. *Hist. Eccl.* viii. 2.

which devised and fashioned it for her use. Nevertheless its adoption by the Church was not without peril. It was originally a pagan art, and it brought with it into the Church something of the pagan spirit. It revolutionised public worship, transforming "the assembly of the brethren" into a school and the preacher into a master. Look at a few instances.

We have already observed that our college gown is a relic of the Greek schools of rhetoric; and our pulpit gown has the same origin. When the preacher adopted the rhetorician's method, he adopted also his dress.

The Church's adoption of Greek Rhetoric introduced a new idea of preaching. In early days down to the third century, as appears from St. Ignatius, St. Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria,¹ a sermon was called a "homily" (ὁμιλία); and since the word signifies properly "conversation," it defines the early preaching as—what it indeed was—kindly, simple, and familiar converse on the things of God. The Latin term was *allocutio*,² which has precisely the same idea. Rhetoric revolutionised preaching. It was no longer

¹ Cf. Lightfoot on Ign. *ad Polyc.* v.

² Cf. Tert. *De Anima*, 9: "Jam vero prout scripturæ leguntur aut psalmi canuntur aut allocutiones proferuntur aut petitiones delegantur."

“ conversation ” but subtle and ornate argumentation ; and the name “ homily ” was displaced by two terms of the schools of rhetoric. One was “ disputation ”—in Greek *διάλεξις*¹ and in Latin *disputatio* ;² and the other *λόγος*,³ which signified properly not merely “ a word ” but “ reason,” “ discourse.” Its Latin equivalent was *sermo*,⁴ and it still persists in our word “ sermon.” When we speak of “ a sermon,” we are using the language of the Greek Schools.

(3) Infection of the pagan spirit.

Had the innovations of Rhetoric ceased here they would have brought no harm to the Church and not a little profit by adapting the presentation of her message to the requirements of the intellectual world. But unhappily they brought with them a large measure of the spirit of the pagan schools, and infected Christian preaching with an unhallowed taint which has clung to it ever since. Inasmuch as the success of the rhetoricians lay in their popularity, their aim was to catch the popular

¹ Cf. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 36, where Origen’s Homilies are called *διαλέξεις*.

² Cf. Aug. *In Joan. Ev. Tract.* lxxxix. 5 : “ hæc disputatio est jam claudenda.” *Conf.* v. xiii. : “ Et studiose audiebam (Ambrosium) disputantem in populo.”

³ St. Chrysostom’s Sermons are entitled *λόγοι*.

⁴ Cf. Aug. *Conf.* v. xiii. : “ et delectabar suavitate sermonis, quamquam eruditioris, minus tamen hilarescentis atque mulcentis quam Fausti erat, quod adtinet ad dicendi modum.”

ear and hit the popular taste. Hence their orations were truly designated "displays" (*ἐπιδείξεις*); and so eager was their rivalry that they would frequently challenge one another to public contests (*ἀγῶνες*). The *popularis aura* was the very breath of their nostrils. They laid themselves out to win the applause of their hearers, gauging their success by its frequency and enthusiasm; and when they failed to secure it, they were sorely discomfited and would sometimes quite collapse. A sophist, says Philostratus,¹ "is thrown off his extemporaneous discourse by a hearer with a grave face, by tardy praise, and by the withholding of the accustomed clapping of hands"; and a prudent orator, according to Lucian,² would obviate disaster by having a claque of friends in the audience ready to stimulate applause in requital of the dinners he had given them.

It was rank and ridiculous charlatanry, and the nobler sort of rhetoricians despised and reprobated it. In his dissertation on *Reading and Disputing for mere Display*³ Epictetus tells how his teacher, the Stoic C. Musonius Rufus, when his hearers applauded him, used

The rhetoricians' love of applause.

¹ *De Vit. Soph.* II. xxvi. 3.

² III. xxiii.

³ *Rhet. Præcept.* 21.

to say : " If you are at leisure to praise me, then I am speaking naught," meaning that, were they engrossed by the truth he was propounding, they would have no thought of his eloquence. There were, however, few like Rufus ; and in the same dissertation Epictetus pours ridicule on the ways of the rhetoricians. He tells how one solicited his praise. " What do you mean by ' my praise ' ? " " Say to me ' Bravo ! ' (*οὐᾶ*) and ' Admirable ! ' (*θαυμαστῶς*). " And with another he remonstrates thus : " The other day your hearers assembled rather coldly and did not shout for you, and you went away humiliated. The other day you were praised, and you went round and said to everybody : ' What was your opinion of me ? ' ' Admirable, sir, upon my life.' ' And how did I do yon passage ? ' ' Which passage ? ' ' The one where I described Pan and the Nymphs.' ' Oh, it was supernatural ! (*ὑπερφυσῶς*). " " My audience was much larger to-day," says another, " gaping for praise." " Yes, much." " I fancy there were five hundred." " You're far out. Put it at a thousand." " Dio never had as big an audience." " Not likely." " And they appreciate arguments nicely." " What is beautiful, sir, can move even a stone."

Such was the manner of the Greek rhetoricians, and it was imitated, even to extravagance, by the Christian preachers both Eastern and Western.¹ They were rhetoricians, and they were generally to the full as greedy of popularity as their pagan compeers. Their sermons were oratorical "displays," and their success was measured by the plaudits which they evoked. The word was *κρότος*, which, like the Latin *plausus*, signified properly "clapping of hands"; but it went beyond this. The hearers would stamp with their feet, wave their napkins and hats, utter approving and admiring ejaculations, and sometimes, in a transport of enthusiasm, start to their feet and shout loud and long.² And most preachers delighted in such tributes, and were bitterly disappointed if they missed them. "If," says St. Chrysostom,³ "they win the plaudits of the assemblage, they are as glad as if they had got a kingdom; but if they end the discourse amid silence, their despondency is worse than hell." And some, after the example of the pagan rhetoricians, had

Ap-
plause.
of ser-
mons.

¹ Cf. Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, xiv. iv. 27.

² Cf. Hieron. *adv. Vigilant. Epist.* lxxv: "Recordare quæso illius diei quando me de resurrectione et veritate corporis prædicante ex latere subsultabas et plaudebas manu et applodebas pede et orthodoxum clamabas."

³ *In Act. Apost.* xxx.

hirelings in the audience to start the applause. Even St. Cyril, that arrogant and worldly-minded champion of orthodoxy, so far forgot the dignity of his high office as Patriarch of Alexandria that he stooped to this ignoble device.¹

A fashion
of the
age.

The fashion of congregational applause was universal in the early centuries, and there are frequent evidences of it in the extant discourses of the period. To us it seems a gross unseemliness, indeed a degradation of worship and a desecration of the Sanctuary, and we may marvel that it should have been tolerated. It ought, however, to be considered that not only had the schools of rhetoric familiarised the practice but it was congenial to the emotional temperaments of the Greek and Latin races. And it must also be remembered that the preachers, after the example of the rhetoricians, delivered their elaborate discourses extemporaneously, and not a few of their most striking passages are unpremediated digressions suggested and inspired by accidental circumstances, like that eloquent "aside" where St. Chrysostom pauses to rebuke his congregation for glancing round at an attendant lighting the lamps at the evening service and

¹ Cf. *Socr. Eccl. Hist.* vii. 13.

thus diverting their attention from the greater light which he was displaying to them from the Scriptures.¹ It is thus no wonder that they should have been dependent on the sympathy of their hearers and, as one alleged,² found "support" in manifestations of their approval and appreciation. An outburst of applause would afford a preacher a welcome breathing-space and enable him to slur over a difficulty; and St. Jerome in a wise letter on *The Life of the Clergy* to his young friend Nepotianus³ relates an amusing anecdote of his teacher, the celebrated St. Gregory of Nazianzus. He once asked the master for an explanation of that puzzling phrase in the Gospel according to St. Luke "the second-vi. 1. first Sabbath," and he received the playful answer: "I'll instruct you on the matter in Church, where, when all the people are applauding me, you'll be forced in spite of yourself to know what you don't know; or else, if you be the only one that keeps silence, you'll be condemned as the only fool in the congregation."

Unseemly as it appears to us, the fashion of applauding sermons was natural and indeed At first
ap-
proved.

¹ Cf. Bingham, *Antiq.* xiv. iv. 8, 11.

² Isid. Pelus. *Epist.* iii. 382.

³ *Epist.* ii.

inevitable at that period when preachers and people alike were racially emotional and had been habituated to the fashion of the schools of rhetoric. It was the instinctive response of the hearers to a message which powerfully appealed to them, and it is no wonder that it should for a time have gratified even the noblest of the Christian teachers. Thus in his fourth Homily on the Book of Genesis St. Chrysostom warmly commends the people of Antioch for the devotion which they displayed in crowding daily to hear him and hanging on his lips lest they should lose a word and, above all, in continually applauding him—"the greatest proof," as he regarded it, "that they received his discourse with pleasure." "And clearly," he proceeds, "one who hears a discourse with pleasure fixes it indelibly on his understanding."

After-
wards
repro-
bated.

By and by, however, he found reason to revise this judgment. He perceived how evanescent was all that enthusiasm; and in his later preaching he would sternly repress the exuberance of his hearers, telling them that what he desired was not their plaudits but the fruits of holiness in their lives. "You applaud here!" he cries in one place. "Not here is your opportunity for applause. In

the sequel you will have opportunity both for applause and for emulation.”¹ And here is a dramatic and poignant passage where that prince of preachers unloads his breast of its burden of grief and shame :² “ This it is that subverts the churches—that you seek not a discourse that pricks the heart but one that can delight by its rattle and the composition of its phrases, as though you were listening to singers and harpers. . . . We busy ourselves with beauties of sentences, with arrangements and harmonies, in order that we may please, not that we may profit ; that we may be admired, not that we may teach ; that we may delight, not that we may prick the heart ; that we may be applauded and depart with a meed of praise, not that we may attune your characters. Believe me, I am speaking home. For, when my discourse is applauded, just at the moment I feel as a man naturally does—why should not one tell the truth ? I am delighted and overjoyed. But when I go home and bethink me that those who applauded me are nothing profited but any profit they should have received they have lost by the applause and the praises, I am pained, and groan, and weep, and feel as

¹ *In Epist. I ad Cor. Hom. xiii.*

² *In Act. Apost. Hom. xxx.*

though I had spoken all in vain. And I say to myself: 'What is the good of my efforts, since my hearers have no wish to gather any fruit from our discourses?' And often I have thought of laying down a law prohibiting applause and persuading you to listen in silence and befitting orderliness." Nor was St. Chrysostom alone in reprobating the unseemly fashion. Here is St. Jerome's counsel to Nepotianus: "When you teach in Church, let it not be the people's shouting that is raised but their groaning. Let the hearers' tears be your praises."

No affinity with monkish buffoonery.

Unseemly and mischievous as it may have been, the fashion always maintained in the Patristic Church a certain dignity. The preachers appealed to their hearers' intellects; and it was *applause* that they elicited by their skilful argumentation, their literary grace, and their lofty oratory. Is there a solitary instance on record where they occasioned merriment or excited laughter? This banality was reserved for the mediæval monks, who pandered to the taste of their times by coarse jocularities and grotesque buffoonery, and who unhappily have their modern successors. Laughter has its place, but its place is not the House of God; and to provoke it there is intolerable

desecration. Cowper's lines¹ are worthy of our remembrance :

“ He, that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul ;
To break a jest, when pity should inspire
Pathetic exhortation ; and t' address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart ! ”

The worst form of the offence is jocular handling of sacred passages, like that sally of a pulpiteer who in preaching on the story of Joseph's brethren casting him into the pit remarked that they thought it “ a splendid opening for a young man.” This sort of thing is unpardonable. It is stupid vulgarity, lacking even the poor excuse of cleverness. It is an example of the crime of “ poisoning the sacred wells ” or “ debasing the religious currency ” ; for the silly jest sticks in one's memory and obtrudes itself, like a grinning jackanapes, whenever one recalls the abused passage. “ The art of spoiling,” says George Eliot,² “ is within the reach of the dullest faculty :

¹ *Task* (“ The Time-piece ”). Cf. Richard Baxter, *Reformed Pastor*, ch. v : “ You cannot break men's hearts by jesting with them, or telling them a smooth tale, or patching up a gaudy oration.”

² *Theophr. Such*, x.

the coarsest clown with a hammer in his hand might chip the nose off every statue and bust in the Vatican, and stand grinning at the effect of his work."

Akin to
Puritan
hum.

It would be a grave injustice to the patristic preachers to charge them with a folly belonging to later and very different days. Ambitious they were and vain-glorious they may often have been, but they were never trivial and never ridiculous. The fashion of applauding sermons was peculiar to that age, and perhaps its nearest analogy in modern times is a custom which obtained in England during the seventeenth century: "when the preacher touched any favourite topic in a manner that delighted his audience, their approbation was expressed by a loud *hum*, continued in proportion to their zeal or pleasure." The custom was much in vogue among the Puritans; and the deep, stern *hum* which was wont to greet the harangues of Cromwell's military preachers, betokened more impressively than any exuberant demonstration the grim resolution of their hearers.¹ That *hum* was in old England what an outburst of applause had been in the days of St. Chrysostom—the congregation's spontaneous response to a moving appeal;

¹ Scott, *Woodstock*, i.

and how like they were in the impression they made—gratifying vain preachers and vexing the spiritually minded—appears from an incident which Dr. Samuel Johnson relates.¹ On some public occasion Thomas Sprat the poet, Bishop of Rochester, and Gilbert Burnet the historian, Bishop of Salisbury, both preached before the House of Commons. Burnet preached first ; and during his discourse “ part of his congregation *hummed* so loudly and so long, that he sat down to enjoy it, and rubbed his face with his handkerchief. When Sprat preached, he likewise was honoured with the like animating *hum* ; but he stretched out his hand to the congregation, and cried ‘ Peace, peace, I pray you peace.’ ”

¹ *Lives of Poets*, “ Sprat.”

APOSTOLIC PREACHING

“ Petrus et Andreas et filii Zebedæi cæterique condiscipuli omnes non de schola rhetorum aut philosophorum assumpti sunt, et nihilominus tamen Salvator per ipsos operatus est salutem in medio terræ.”

ST. BERN. CLAR. *super Cant. Serm. xxxvi.*

APOSTOLIC PREACHING

WE have been investigating the Jewish and Pagan antecedents of Christian preaching ; and it now remains that we should consider how these shaped the message of the Apostles and prescribed their method of proclaiming the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were Jews, and at the outset it was to Jews exclusively that they preached. Naturally they followed the Jewish method, and this was defined for them (1) by the example of the ancient prophets and their rare successors in later days like John the Baptist, and (2) by the practice of the Rabbis in their schools and synagogues. Prophetic preaching was the impassioned proclamation of an immediate revelation with that unfaltering authority which is inspired by a vision of God's purpose and an assurance of His commission ; whereas Rabbinical preaching was the " exposition " of a sacred tradition. A Prophet was God's spokesman ; a Rabbi was an interpreter of His Law.

Prophetic and Rabbinism the twofold norm of apostolic preaching.

The
Apostles' prophetic
rôle :
testi-
mony to
the Re-
surrec-
tion.

Ac. i. 22,

ii. 23, 24,
32.

iii. 14,
15.

iv. 10.

x. 40, 41.

The Apostles performed both these rôles. It was inevitable that they should. Their message required it. For what was their message? It was twofold. First, it was the proclamation of a transcendent and amazing revelation—the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. They were “witnesses to His Resurrection”; and their preaching was *imprimis* a proclamation of that tremendous fact. “Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay : whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death : because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.” “This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses.” “Ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life ; whom God raised from the dead ; whereof we are witnesses.” “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in Him doth this man stand here before you whole.” “Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of

God, even to us." Here we see the Apostles in the rôle of Prophets, God's witnesses proclaiming a revelation which their eyes had seen and their ears had heard.

This, however, was not all. What did the Resurrection mean? It meant that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Promised Saviour; and thus there devolved upon the Apostles in their preaching to the Jews the task of demonstrating this claim from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Here they adopted the Rabbinical rôle as expositors of the sacred tradition.

Their Rabbinical rôle : scriptural proof of the Lord's Messiahship.

Observe how they were wont to set about the task. They did not begin with an assertion of the Lord's Messiahship and then refute the objections which this must have provoked. They would thus have excited controversy, and controversy inevitably issues in exasperation and hostility. And so they proceeded after a wiser fashion. They would read Messianic passages and expound them, and then they would point out how precisely those prophetic foreshadowings were realised in the Lord Jesus. They exhibited the scriptural portraiture of the Coming Saviour, and then pointed to Jesus : Behold ! is not this He of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote ? Thus : the supreme difficulty which the Jews felt in

Their method.

accepting Him as the Messiah was His ignominious death ; and with this view the Apostles would turn to a passage like Is. liii or Ps. xxii, and after unfolding the ancient prophecy of a suffering Redeemer, “ despised and rejected of men,” “ a reproach of men and despised of the people,” they would present its historic fulfilment in the Lord Jesus. Observe how their method is defined in the Book of Acts. The formula there is never “ they proved that Jesus was the Christ ” but always—though both our English versions miss this—“ they proved that the Christ was Jesus.” Thus

ix. 20, 22. it is written of St. Paul that after his conversion on the road to Damascus “ straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus ”—not “ that He is the Son of God,” but—“ that the Son of God (the Messiah) is this man ” ; and he “ confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving—proving by collation of passages (*συμβιβάζων*)—that the Christ is this

xvii. 2, 3. man.” Again, in the synagogue at Thessalonica “ he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging—unfolding their significance and placing one passage alongside another (*διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος*)—that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead ; and that the Christ

is this man—the Jesus whom I proclaim unto you.” Again, at Corinth he “testified to the ^{xviii. 5.} Jews that the Christ is Jesus.” And similarly Apollos, that “eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures,” “powerfully confuted the Jews, ^{Ver. 28.} demonstrating by the Scriptures that the Christ is Jesus.” Such was their procedure: they exhibited the prophetic picture of the Messiah, and then they indicated its correspondence with the history of Jesus. “St. Paul, Apollos, and the other Christian missionaries were to a large extent on ground common to them and their audience when they preached a Messiah, and starting from this generally conceded doctrine, they proceeded to identify this Messiah with Jesus.”¹ With preachers versed in the Scriptures it was an effective line of argument; and presently for the guidance of such as were less skilled in handling the sacred tradition there were drawn up collections of scriptural “testimonies” like the *Selections from the Law and the Prophets regarding the Saviour and all our Faith* which Melito of Sardes prepared for his friend Onesimus in the middle of the second century.² And from various New Testament

¹ Kirsopp Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 110.

² Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 26; cf. Routh, *Reliq. Sacr.* i. pp. 119 ff.

evidences, especially recurrent combinations of "proof-texts," it appears that such collections were already in use in the days of the Apostles.¹

Peter's
dis-
course
at Pente-
cost.
Ac. ii.
14-36.

Look at any of the apostolic discourses which are reported with some completeness, and you will see the method in practice. Take St. Peter's discourse on the Day of Pentecost. Its occasion was the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. Ever since the Lord's departure they had been doubtful and despondent, but that heavenly visitation transformed them. It enkindled hope and courage in their breasts, and opened their lips to testify of their Risen Lord. The multitude marvelled, and some put their enthusiasm down to intoxication. This reached the ears of St. Peter, and when he rose to speak, he glanced at the coarse suggestion and declared that what they had witnessed was a fulfilment of the ancient prophecy of the outpouring of God's Spirit in the last days. Then he plunged into his discourse. He faces them in the fearless manner of the ancient prophets, and after charging home upon them the crime which had so lately been wrought in their midst—the crucifixion of Jesus, "a man approved of

Joel ii.
28-32.

¹ Cf. my *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, pp. 229, 394.

God unto them by mighty works and wonders and signs which God had wrought by Him," proclaims the miracle of His Resurrection. What did it mean? It meant that Jesus was the Messiah, and this he shows by a deft appeal to Scripture. He quotes the familiar words of David :

" I beheld the Lord always before my face ;
 For He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved :
 Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced ;
 Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope :
 Because Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades,
 Neither wilt Thou give Thine Holy One to see corruption.
 Thou madest known unto me the ways of life ;
 Thou shalt make me full of gladness with Thy countenance."

Ps. xvi.
8-11.

What, asks the Apostle, are we to make of these words? Plainly they are not true of David; for he died, and his flesh saw corruption. Nor had he been raised from the dead; for his sepulchre was at that day an honoured memorial in the city of Jerusalem, and his dust was still lying there. What, then, did David mean? He was not speaking of himself at all but of the Christ, the Messiah, his Son whom God had sworn to raise up of the fruit of his loins and set on his throne, and whose

was thus that the Apostles preached to Jews, but plainly another method was required when they preached to Gentiles who knew nothing of the Jewish Scriptures and the Messianic Hope. The earliest occasion of preaching to Gentiles was the persecution which ensued on the martyrdom of Stephen in the spring of 33 A.D. The Church at Jerusalem was dispersed, and some of the fugitives escaped northward and got as far as Syrian Antioch. They preached everywhere by the way, but they always limited themselves to the Jewish synagogues until they reached the Syrian metropolis, and there they started preaching to the Gentiles as well. Here the historian's language is significant. His constant formula when he speaks of the Apostles preaching to Jews is, as we have seen: "they testified," they "demonstrated by the Scriptures, that the Christ was Jesus"; but now he employs a different formula: "they spake to the Greeks, telling the good tidings of the Lord Jesus." Preaching to Jews, they proved from the Scriptures the Messiahship of Jesus; but when they preached to Gentiles, who knew nothing of the Jewish Scriptures and the Messianic Hope, they simply told the gracious story of all that He had been and done and

Cf. Ac.

xi. 19-21.

spoken in the days of His flesh, and how He had died on the Cross and been buried and had been raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand. Their preaching to the Gentiles was just the story of our Lord ; and so Papias tells us ¹ that St. Mark's Gospel was his reminiscences of the preaching of his master St. Peter.

Its
efficacy.

And it proved mightily efficacious, largely no doubt by reason of its very simplicity, which would have a peculiar charm for audiences satiated with the ornate and artificial rhetoric of their sophists. When those nameless refugees visited Antioch, their artless tale of "the good tidings of the Lord Jesus" moved the city more deeply and abidingly than the magnificent eloquence of St. Chrysostom three centuries later. It is written that "the hand of the Lord was with them ; and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord. . . . And much people was added unto the Lord."

Ac. xi.
21, 24.

St.
Paul's
unfortun-
ate ex-
periment
in Greek
Rhetoric.

Probably it might have been well for the Church had she maintained the primitive manner of preaching and never learned the art of Greek Rhetoric ; and the thought is confirmed by a humiliating experience of St. Paul. He was familiar with Greek Rhetoric ;

¹ Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39.

for he had been born and bred in the city of Tarsus, and at that period Tarsus ranked as the world's principal seat of learning, surpassing even Athens and Alexandria.¹ She had a famous school of rhetoric, and his contemporary Apollonius of Tyana studied there under the celebrated Euthydemus. Of course a young Pharisee destined for the sacred office of a Rabbi never studied the pagan art, but he could not live at Tarsus without hearing it practised and observing how it appealed to the Greek mind. When he entered on his apostolic career, he preached after the Jewish manner both to Jews and to Gentiles and found it abundantly efficacious; but by and by an occasion arose when he was tempted to abandon its simplicity and essay the arts of rhetoric. It was in the autumn of 51 A.D. when, driven from Macedonia by Jewish hostility, he betook himself southward and found an asylum at Athens. There he not only visited the Jewish synagogue and reasoned with the Jews but after the example of the philosophers conversed in the market-place with the nimble-witted citizens who frequented it, intent after the Athenian fashion less on business than the discussion of the latest political or metaphysical

Ac. xvii.
16-34.

¹ Cf. my *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, pp. 18 ff.

question. His novel doctrine excited keen interest, and this presently aroused the jealousy of the philosophers who viewed him as an unauthorised intruder into their province. The burden of his discourse was "Jesus and the Resurrection (*Anastasis*)," and from the vague reports which reached them, they supposed that these were the names of a couple of new-fangled deities, male and female—"Jesus" and "Anastasis"; and they arraigned him, like Socrates, as "a proclaimer of strange divinities" before the Council of the Areopagus, which was charged with the investigation of religious innovations.

His
speech
before
the
Council
of the
Areopagus.

The Council of the Areopagus was an open court, and it was a novel and severe ordeal for the Apostle to address that imposing assemblage—the bench of judges, the very élite of Athenian culture and eloquence, and a throng of curious and critical spectators accustomed to dazzling displays of subtle dialectic and brilliant rhetoric. Naturally he was ambitious to acquit himself worthily; and, mastered by his environment, he disused his wonted manner which had served so well with less distinguished audiences, and essayed the manner of a Greek rhetorician. It was a daring experiment, and so far as concerned his

argument it succeeded well. He opened with a skilful stroke. For centuries it had been the custom at Athens and several other Greek cities¹ to erect "nameless altars" and offer sacrifices thereon, lest, while they propitiated the gods whom they knew, the citizens should, by involuntary neglect, incur the displeasure of some other unknown. In going about the city the Apostle had observed such an altar with its inscription TO AN UNKNOWN GOD; and it had seemed to him a pathetic confession of the heathen heart's ignorance of the True God and its hungry yearning after Him. "Here," he says, "is the truth which you are groping after. I am not, as my accusers allege, 'a proclaimer of strange divinities.' What you are worshipping without knowing it, this it is that I am 'proclaiming' to you." Then he proceeds to demonstrate the irrationality of their pagan idolatry, enforcing his argument not only by appealing to the distinctive doctrines of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophies—the Epicurean doctrine of the divine remoteness and independence of human ministration and the Stoic doctrine of Providence—Cf. vers. 25, 26. but by quoting the testimonies of the poets Epimenides and Aratus.²

¹ *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, p. 11.

² *Ibid.* p. 24.

Its
failure.

It was a skilful argument in the very manner of the Greek rhetoricians ; and though he lacked their arts of speech and gesture, he held the attention of his audience until he reached his conclusion and charged them to repent and believe in the Saviour whom God had ordained and had attested " by raising Him from the dead." And then they broke into laughter. What amused them was the discovery that " Anastasis " meant merely " resurrection from the dead " and was not, as had been supposed, the name of a strange goddess. The whole case was a ridiculous blunder, and it was summarily dismissed. Ridicule is fatal to a cause, and St. Paul promptly took his departure from Athens and removed to the neighbouring city of Corinth. He arrived there humbled and ashamed, realising what a blunder he had committed in letting his " thoughts be corrupted from their simplicity and purity toward Christ " by emulating the pagan art of rhetoric ; and he resolved that he would never repeat it. Writing to the Corinthians nearly five years later, he recalls that bitter experience : " When I came to you, brothers, it was not with lofty speech or wisdom that I came, announcing to you the testimony of God. For my determination

2 Cor.
xi. 3.

Cf. 1
Cor. ii.
1-5.

was to know nothing among you except Jesus as Christ, and that a crucified Christ. And it was in weakness and fear and much trembling that I was brought among you ; and my speech and my message were not arrayed in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might be arrayed not in men's wisdom but in God's power."

And he kept his resolution to the last. A striking example is furnished by his defence before the Roman Procurator Festus and King Herod Agrippa and their officers and courtiers at the close of his two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea in midsummer, 59 A.D. It was an occasion which might well have seemed not merely to justify but to demand the rhetorician's arts ; yet the Apostle eschewed these. His defence was nothing else than a declaration of " the testimony of God," a vindication of his faith in " Jesus as Christ, and that a crucified Christ." It was a personal narrative. He related his notorious antecedents as a Pharisee and a bitter persecutor of the Gospel, and showed how by a revelation on the road to Damascus he had been constrained to espouse the hated cause. Thenceforward his life had been spent in witnessing to the Messiahship

His
method
thence-
forward.

Ac. xxvi.

of Jesus attested by the fulfilment of the prophetic Scriptures in His Death and Resurrection. It was a simple and unadorned testimony, yet there was in it a profounder wisdom than the Greek schools knew; and Festus recognised this when in the midst of the moving argument he exclaimed in amazement: "You are mad, Paul! Your great learning is turning you mad." That involuntary interruption was a higher tribute than any rapture of applause which ever greeted a rhetorician.

Such, then, was apostolic preaching—the preaching which in those early days "turned the world upside down" and has done the like ever since wherever it has been truly practised, proving itself "the power of God unto salvation." Remember what it was. It was, in the first place, a personal testimony to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The Apostles were, in accordance with His parting commission, "witnesses" to their Risen Lord, declaring their own blessed experience of His grace. But more was needed. Mere personal testimony is never final until it is confirmed by an objective guarantee. And so the Apostles were wont to corroborate their testimony by appeal to Scripture, showing how the grace which they had found in the Lord Jesus was

A personal testimony historically confirmed. Ac. xvii. 6.

Ac. i. 8; cf. Jo. xv. 27.

the fulfilment of Israel's long hope and the consummation of God's redemptive operations all down the course of her history. Their preaching was thus a personal testimony vindicated and enforced by the experience of the race.

And this is true Christian preaching from generation to generation. The marvel of it is that it is at once so simple and so profound—the profoundest employment which can engage the human intellect. On one side indeed it is mere testimony, and a very child can tell what his eyes have seen and his ears have heard ; nor is there anything more appealing than a plain man's declaration of his experience of the Saviour's love and grace. Yet there is room for more. Testimony is but one side of preaching ; and a preacher who would commend the Gospel to the mind of his generation has need of every resource of human learning. The danger here lies in ignoring the primary necessity of a living experience and forgetting that the Gospel is a Gospel and not a philosophy. Preaching is essentially a testimony, appealing to the hearer's heart ; but learning is most needful too, and its use lies in the vindication of the testimony to the hearer's intellect and the enlistment

The
norm of
Christian
preach-
ing.

not merely of his heart but of his mind as well. It is the personal testimony that makes the difference. Appeal merely to the intellect, and you are a rhetorician ; appeal to the heart and justify to the intellect the heart's affections, and you are a Christian preacher.

A mes-
sage for
humanity.

The deepest thought is always the simplest, and hence it is that a Christian preacher of the highest order makes an equal appeal to wise and unwise, learned and unlearned. If our preaching be mere testimony, then it will appeal only to simple folk ; and if it be mere philosophy, then it will miss these, and while it may please the intellectual, it will never satisfy their deepest need. Christian preaching is more than testimony and more than philosophy ; and it appeals to those spiritual instincts and aspirations which stir in every human breast and unite us all, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, in a common brotherhood. And so St. Paul wrote to the intellectual Corinthians, discontented with what they deemed the simplicity of his preaching and charmed with the eloquence of Apollos : " We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock and unto Greeks foolishness ; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It

I Cor.
i. 23, 24.

is told of Dr. Lewis Edwards, that excellent Welsh preacher and teacher of last generation, that he once addressed this counsel to his students at Bala College : " You will find among your congregations different sorts of people and people of varied attainments. You will find there the intelligent few, the knowing many, and the ignorant mass. I would advise you to ignore the knowing many, preach to the ignorant mass, and you will please the intelligent few." Keep in personal communion with the Living Lord, keep yourselves in His love and in the experience of His grace, and devote yourselves with all your intellectual powers and resources to reverent and unwearied study of the sacred records of His incarnate revelation ; and then, heedless of all superficial differences, speak to your hearers simply and lovingly of the treasures of grace which you have found. And the human need which is deep in us all, will gladly respond.

So it was with the Apostles, and so will it be with us if we practise their art. It is a noble and glorious office ; and now that we have seen something of its history, it remains for us to consider how we should address ourselves to its discharge.

THE PREACHER IN HIS STUDY

I. THE NECESSITY OF STUDY

“Cur ullum ejus verbulum contemnendum ducimus,
quem Verbi titulo colimus et adoramus?”

ERASM. *in Nov. Test. Annot. Præf.*

“Divinus enim sermo, sicut mysteriis prudentes
exercet, sic plerumque superficie simplices refovet. . . .
Quasi quidam quippe est fluvijs, ut ita dixerim, planus et
altus, in quo et agnus ambulet et elephas natet.”

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT.

THE PREACHER IN HIS STUDY

I. THE NECESSITY OF STUDY

THE preacher has three arenas. The first is his Study, where he prepares his sermons ; the second his Pulpit, where he delivers them ; and the third his Congregation, where he commends them. And our task now is to consider the offices pertaining to each, to discuss the problems which they present, and to indicate the methods which experience suggests for their successful discharge.

We begin with the Study. The term “ study ” has three uses in English. It signifies, first, the place where one studies ; then, the art of study ; and, finally, a particular subject of study. It is the two latter that concern us here ; for what claims our attention is the preacher’s special subject of study—the Holy Scriptures, and his method of study—how he should handle the sacred records and relevant literature. But a preliminary observation on the first may not be amiss. It is

The
preacher’s
arenas.

The
Manse
Study.

this—that a Study is a ministerial necessity. A Manse without a Study would be comparable to a Church without a Pulpit ; and the efficiency of the Pulpit is commensurate with the efficiency of the Study. And therefore the Study is supremely important ; and when a minister settles in his Manse, he should, before all else, be careful to choose as his Study a fitting chamber and equip it for its sacred use. It should be a peaceful room, remote from disturbance ; and it should have a pleasant outlook. The ideal is that chamber in the House Beautiful where Bunyan's Pilgrim was laid by Piety, Prudence, and Charity—“ a large upper chamber, whose window opened toward the sun-rising : the name of the chamber was Peace.” It is not the least of the inspirations of a country charge that, as the minister sits among his books, the fragrant sunshine streams through his open window, and he hears the singing of the birds and the rustling of the breeze, and when he looks abroad, he sees the fields and woodlands and mountains. And whatever lies without, a true Study within is a hallowed place. You look round the walls, and there you see your familiar and treasured volumes, and find yourself in the presence of the immortals. “ You

see here," says Erasmus,¹ "the volume of the Gospels? In this He talks with me who once joined Himself in eloquent companionship with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and made them feel no toil of the journey, but only a sweet burning of heart as they drank in His honeyed discourses. In this Paul speaks to me, in this Isaiah and the rest of the Prophets. Here talks with me the sweet Chrysostom, here Basil, here Augustine, here Jerome, here Cyprian, and the rest of the Doctors no less learned than eloquent. Know you any who talk with you so pleasantly, any to compare with these? In such a fellowship, which never fails me, think you can the weariness of solitude creep over me?" For one who knows its use, a Study is a precious place, a happy haven, a hallowed retreat.

But we must know its use; and so let us pass on to consider the art of study. It is a necessary art and an imperative duty for a preacher; and where it is neglected, there can be no truly profitable or abidingly fruitful ministry. Perhaps this may seem an exaggeration; but experience attests it, and it may serve to enforce it if we turn our attention here to two common objections.

Study a
preacher's
imper-
ative duty.

Two ob-
jections:

¹ *Colloq. Mil. et Carthus.*

1. Learning an un-spiritual thing.

1. It is frequently alleged, especially in pietistic circles, that study is not merely unnecessary but positively injurious, inasmuch as learning is an unspiritual thing and harmful to the Church. The learning which alone avails is the wisdom which the Holy Spirit imparts, and which is gained not by commerce with books but by communion with the Living Lord. He speaks to believing souls in His Living Word, and human learning is as a veil upon the heart obscuring the light which shines from the sacred page. Were not the first Apostles "unlearned and ignorant men," rude fishermen from the Lake of Galilee? And did not St. Paul, though versed above his contemporaries in Rabbinical lore, recognise that he had been "sent to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect"?

Cf. Ac.
iv. 13.

1 Cor.
i. 17.

The mis-
chief of
unsancti-
fied
learning.

This contention has a pious look, and indeed it is not without an aspect of truth which it were well for us to consider and lay to heart. In a too much forgotten religious classic, the Memoirs of that saintly Professor of Divinity in the University of St. Andrews, Thomas Halyburton, whose father had fallen a victim to prelatial persecution in the days of the Covenant, and whose childhood was passed

in exile at Rotterdam, it is told how once after the deliverance of the Revolution, when he was living at Perth with his widowed mother and preparing for the ministry, a godly old minister visited his home and in conversation with the lad asked him if he "sought a blessing on his learning." On his frankly answering "No," the old man exclaimed with an austere look: "Sirrah, unsanctified learning has done much mischief to the kirk of God." "This saying," adds Halyburton, "stuck with me ever after, and left a deep impression on me."

Truly "unsanctified learning has done much mischief to the kirk of God"; but it is not "unsanctified learning" that is in question now. "Unsanctified learning has done much mischief"; but there is a thing which has done vastly more, and this is *unsanctified ignorance*. Learning is good, and sanctified learning is a precious gift of God, most profitable to the Church at all times and especially in an age like ours when knowledge is so widely increased and faith is troubled by so many perplexing problems. And it is with sanctified learning that we have now to do.

Nothing could be more remote from fact than the notion that the first Apostles were "unlearned and ignorant men." Who was it

The
blessing
of sancti-
fied
learning.

The
learning
of the
Apostles.

that thus designated them? It was the members of the Sanhedrin—the priestly Sadducees and the learned Scribes. Peter and John had been arraigned before that august court; and when they made their defence, their judges “ marvelled at their boldness ”—their “ freedom of speech.” And the reason of their surprise was that the Apostles were *ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται*, which signifies not “ unlearned and ignorant men ” but “ uneducated men and laymen ” or “ private persons ”—men who had been trained in no college and held no office. What they perceived was not that they had no learning but that they had a learning of a rare sort, and their wonder was how they had acquired it. Had they known the facts, they would not have wondered. For though the Apostles had graduated in no college, they had enjoyed an education such as no college could furnish. They had never sat at the feet of Rabbi Gamaliel, but for three transcendent years they had companied with the Incarnate Christ and heard the words of Him who spake as never man spake and in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In the world’s judgment they were “ laymen,” being neither Priests nor Rabbis ;

yet they held a nobler dignity than the world could confer ; for they were Apostles of the Eternal Master, trained in His school, ordained by His blessed hand, and bearing His divine commission. What education is comparable to theirs ? And they had a learning which has constituted them evermore the teachers of mankind.

We have need then, if we would be their true successors, of such learning as theirs. And this we shall acquire only by reverent and diligent study of the sacred records bequeathed to us by those men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, the imperishable memorials of the historic revelation which culminated in the Resurrection. And the condition of its successful prosecution is twofold—the devotion at once of heart and of intellect.

First of all, the heart must be engaged, according to that maxim of the saintly Neander : *Pectus est quod facit theologum*, “ It is the heart that makes the theologian.” This is the primary necessity. For secular learning the devotion of the intellect suffices ; but sacred learning claims also the devotion of the heart, since here the material of our study is the Holy Scriptures, and these are no mere historic

Require-
ments
of sacred
study :

(1) De-
votion
of heart.

records but the testimony of its eye-witnesses to the historic revelation of the Eternal Saviour. They are not the end ; they are only the way, and unless they conduct us to Him, we miss their purpose. And therefore in all our dealings with them we must be seeking Him, desiring a vision of His glory, and realising our need of the guidance and illumination of His Holy Spirit. It is told of St. Bonaventura, one of those lovers of the Lord who kept the lamp of the Evangel burning during the darkness of the Middle Ages, that St. Thomas Aquinas once visited him and inquired from what books he derived his wealth of sacred learning. He answered by pointing to the Crucifix. That was the source of his learning : he found it all in believing and adoring contemplation of the mystery of the redeeming Cross.

(2) De-
votion
of in-
tellect.

The devotion of the heart is essential, but it is not in itself sufficient. It is only one side of sacred learning, and the other side is the devotion of the intellect. And the reason is simply this—that the Scriptures are literature. And what a literature! Dr. Samuel Johnson pronounced the New Testament “ the most difficult book in the world, for which the study of a life is required.” Think what peerless treasures it enshrines. St. Luke, the

solitary Gentile among the sacred writers, was no "ignorant and unlearned man." He was college-bred, and his Gospel and his Book of Acts are noble creations, approving him not merely a literary master but an historian of the first order. The Fourth Gospel is a work of rare genius; and the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews is the sublimest extant achievement of the Alexandrian philosophy. And as for St. Paul, there never was a profounder intellect than his, not even Aristotle's. "I think," said Coleridge, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans the most profound work in existence; and I hardly believe that the writings of the old Stoics, now lost, could have been deeper." The plain fact is that the New Testament is the most wonderful book in the world. Its riches are inexhaustible. It has been studied, as no other book has been, for nigh two thousand years, and each generation has discovered in it fresh and unimagined treasures. It is ignorance that makes light of the Holy Scriptures. That ancient volume is a perennial fountain of inspiration. It has moulded the world's thought and coloured every page of its literature. "As for myself," says Goethe, "I love and value it; for almost to it alone do I owe my moral culture."

Literary
handling
of sacred
litera-
ture.

The Holy Scriptures, then, are literature, and they must be handled by literary methods. Hence the necessity of sacred scholarship ; and it were well for us, if we be disposed to depreciate it, to bethink ourselves of the debt we owe to it—to the patient and reverent devotion of believing scholars who have laboured on the Word from generation to generation, purging the sacred text of corruptions and restoring the *ipsissima verba* of the Apostles and Evangelists, or translating it from the original tongues that the plain man may understand it and profit by it, “ opening the window,” as King James’s translators express it, “ to let in the light ; breaking the shell, that we may eat the kernel ; putting aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place ; removing the cover of the well, that we may come by the water.” But for sacred scholarship the Scriptures would be at this hour, for the multitude of men, a sealed book, and we would still be sitting in mediæval darkness.

Its
secular
setting.

And further, not only is the historic revelation enshrined in a contemporary literature needing to be interpreted to the modern mind and requiring in the interpreter a knowledge of the world which originally received it, but it is a discovery of God’s relations to humanity

and the Universe ; and even as the prior course of history was a providential preparation for it, so the subsequent course has been the working out of its redemptive forces and an ever fuller unfolding of its wonder and glory. Christianity is the divine interpretation of the Universe, and there is no sort of knowledge which does not serve to illumine it. " I never could believe," says George MacDonald,¹ " that a man who did not find God in other places as well as in the Bible ever found Him there at all. And I always thought, that to find God in other books enabled us to see clearly that He was more in the Bible than in any other book, or all other books put together." And so Richard Baxter has told us² how in the days of his spiritual awakening he was wearied with the arid disputations of the schools and was disposed to fancy that there was no profit in study. " But," he says, " I afterward perceived that Education is God's ordinary way for the conveyance of His Grace, and ought no more to be set in opposition to the Spirit than the preaching of the Word."

Is there not an admonition for us here in

¹ *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*, x.

² *Reliq. Baxt.*, I, i. § 6.

The
evidence
of
history.

these days when so much is said of the Church's need of an evangelical revival, and earnest men are labouring and praying that it may be brought to pass? They recall those years of the right hand of the Most High—the revival of '59 or that of Mr. D. L. Moody—when the hearts of men were so deeply stirred and multitudes were brought to the Saviour; and they seek by practising the old methods to rekindle the old enthusiasm, only, alas! as they sorrowfully confess, to experience disappointment. Nor is the reason far to seek. It is written plain on the pages of history. Think of the Reformation. It was nothing else than a mighty revival of evangelical religion; and it is a significant fact that the Reformation, the revival of religion, came hand in hand with the Renaissance, the revival of letters. It was the humanists Erasmus and Buchanan that made the work of Luther and Knox possible; for it was "the new learning" that rediscovered the Scriptures, and it was the breaking forth of their long hidden light that dissipated the night of the Dark Ages. Here is a testimony of Luther.¹ The humanist Hess had sent him a Latin poem, and in the

¹ *Briefe*, ii. p. 313 (De Wette). On Helius Eobanus Hessus cf. Böcking's edition of Ulrich von Hutten's *Epp. Obscur. Virr.* ii. pp. 390 ff.

accompanying letter expressed his apprehension lest classical literature should be neglected amid the newly awakened zeal for Theology; and the Reformer thus reassured him: "I am persuaded that without skill in letters it is quite impossible for pure Theology to stand, even as heretofore, when they were ruined, it shared their miserable overthrow. Nay, I see that never has there been any notable revelation of God's Word unless He has first prepared the way by the rise and flourishing of languages and letters as Baptist fore-runners."

The principle is that a religious revival, if it is to prove permanent, must be at once *emotional* and *intellectual*. Where the latter quality is lacking, the movement inevitably degenerates and becomes unreal, fantastic, and hysterical. A peculiarly instructive example is the revival of last century under Mr. D. L. Moody. Eye-witnesses of the movement are still with us, and from their testimonies and records like the *Lives of Moody and Henry Drummond* one realises the wonder of it. It stirred two continents, and wherever it came, it kindled a Pentecostal enthusiasm. Generally, however, it ran the usual course: the enthusiasm blazed for a

Scotland
and
Moody's
revival.

season and then subsided and died away. But there was at least one notable exception. It persisted in Scotland ; and there it remains a potent force to this day, transfigured indeed and superficially unrecognisable yet real and vital.

Parlous
condi-
tion of
the Free
Church.

And what is the reason ? It is this—that the movement gripped the old Free Church of Scotland and found in her its chief instrument. In those days the Free Church was in a perilous condition. She had been born of that evangelical revival which blessed England in the eighteenth century and, travelling northward, broke the long torpor of Moderatism and issued in the Disruption of 1843 ; and it had happened with her after the wonted manner. Her spiritual fervour had cooled, and the elder generation of her ministers and people were largely living in the past, priding themselves upon their fathers' heroic testimony to Spiritual Independence and tending more and more toward the Pharisaic arrogance of traditional orthodoxy. And what of the younger generation ? That brilliant scholar, Robertson Smith, was indoctrinating his disciples in the novel principles of Old Testament Criticism as these were taught in the schools of the Continent, especially Holland.

A new doctrine is always extreme, and the younger generation was increasingly enamoured of rationalistic views. And thus the Church was torn by bitter controversy, and was menaced by that heavy curse pronounced on the last page of the Old Testament—the turning of the heart of the fathers from the children and the heart of the children from their fathers.

It was at that fateful crisis that Moody appeared ; and his voice awoke the Church and recalled her from traditionalism on the one hand and from rationalism on the other. The extinct fire was rekindled and she became once more the distinctively evangelical Church of Scotland. The new movement would naturally have run the old course and presently passed away ; but this issue was providentially averted. It happened that the breath of the Evangel touched the hearts of a group of young men of the intellectual order just entering on their ministry, among them James Stalker, Robert Barbour, Robertson Nicoll, George Adam Smith, and above all Henry Drummond. They identified themselves with the movement, and they intellectualised it. And thus, all unwittingly, by bridging the perilous gulf between faith and reason, they

The
move-
ment
intellec-
tualised.

wrought a blessed deliverance for their Church and through her for Scotland and Christendom. They were the heralds of an enlightened evangelicalism which, through pulpit, press, and college, has made its gracious appeal to their generation, claiming for Christ the reasonable service of a devoted heart and a consecrated intellect, sure of the eternal verities yet fearless of the larger light which is ever breaking from the Word.

The
evidence
of in-
dividual
experi-
ence.

Thus in the history of the Church is exemplified her vital need godly learning; and the lesson is enforced no less by individual experience. It is the simple truth that the more spiritually minded a minister is the more zealous is his devotion, with all his powers of heart and intellect, to the study of the Word. There is an impressive instance in the story of that illustrious man of God, Dr. Thomas Chalmers.¹ He had ministered in the Fife-shire parish of Kilmany for some eight years ere he attained a saving interest in Christ; and when the light broke into his soul, it transfigured his life. Nowhere was the change more conspicuous than in his new sense of the value of the Holy Scriptures. One of his elders was a venerable saint, John Bonthron,

¹ Hanna's *Memoirs*, i. p. 262.

who lived near the manse ; and it is told how it had grieved him, whenever he visited the young minister during the dark years, to find him always engaged in secular pursuits—experiments in chemistry, studies in philosophy, or the cultivation of his garden. And once he remonstrated : “ I find you aye busy, sir, with one thing or another ; but, come when I may, I never find you at your studies for the Sabbath.” “ Oh,” was the reply, “ an hour or two on the Saturday evening is quite enough for that.” The heavenly vision was vouchsafed, and then all was changed. “ I never come in now, sir,” said the old man, “ but I find you aye busy at your Bible.” “ All too little, John,” was now the answer, “ all too little.”

It is interesting to observe how the simplest question has its metaphysical implicates and runs back to some profound principle. And what is the principle here ? It is the same which was at stake in the Apollinarian controversy fifteen centuries ago. Remember how Apollinarius, in his effort to solve the Christological problem, conceived of our Lord's nature as identical with ours save at one point. He had a human body and a human spirit, and He had also a human soul (*psyche*) ; but in

Intellectual neglect a reversion to Apollinarianism.

Him this last was incomplete. The ancients regarded the "soul" or "life" as twofold, comprehending (1) the *psyche alogos*, the irrational or merely animal life, and (2) the *psyche logike*, "the reasonable soul," synonymous with the *nous*, the "mind" or "intellect," the seat of the will and therefore of personality. The latter was absent in our Lord, and its place was occupied by the Divine Logos. This meant that at the Incarnation our Lord assumed all our nature except our intellect; and St. Gregory of Nazianzus exposed the mischief of the theory in three words—"unassumed is unhealed." Our Lord assumed and by assuming redeemed all our nature except our intellect; and, being unassumed, our intellect remains unredeemed. And intellectual negligence is nothing less than a reversion to that ancient heresy. Christ requires the consecration of the whole of our complex nature. "The God of peace," says the Apostle, "sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Failure to consecrate the spirit is irreligion; failure to consecrate the body is Antinomianism; failure to consecrate the intellect is Apollinarianism.

2. Consider now a second objection to the ministerial duty of study. It is a notion which is apt half unconsciously to occupy our minds, and which is all the more mischievous for its very vagueness—that once we are done with College, we are done with study. We are students while we are at College; but when we enter the ministry, our student days are past. Study is a mere statutory preparation, and when our preparation is accomplished, we have no more need of it and may leave it behind us.

2. Past College, past study.

Of course no one deliberately holds this opinion or would expressly avow it. It is one of those formless ideas which have only to be defined to be immediately repudiated, yet which are frequently entertained and practised. It is a common saying that “we should be students to the end”; and while this is indeed most true, it would perhaps be truer still to say that we are not really students while we are at College: we are then merely learning the art of study, and it is only when we enter upon our life-work that we begin to practise it. The function of College-training is to discover our aptitudes, to reveal our capabilities and our limitations—what we can and what we cannot do, and thus to indicate the line

College-training not study but acquisition of the art.

which we should follow, the field where we are called to labour. It is when we leave College and pass into the ministry that our opportunity arrives. We have then recognised what talents have been entrusted to us, and are at liberty to begin trading with them. And for one who has faith and courage to cherish the noblest ambition, it is indeed a priceless advantage if at the outset of his ministry he be appointed to a light and peaceful charge where he may faithfully discharge the requirements of his sacred office and still have leisure for the prosecution of godly learning—an employment which will not only produce an immediate harvest of gladness for himself and edification for his people but fit him for higher service in years to come.

Recogni-
tion of
one's
métier.

One has missed the supreme end of his College-course unless at its close we have recognised his intellectual *métier*, his congenial domain where he is most at home and may most profitably employ himself. The work which one can do best is the work which God means him to do. And hence emerges a rule for every aspirant to the Holy Ministry : *Recognise your proper place on the broad field of godly learning, and devote yourself to that. Specialise there.* This is peculiarly expedient nowadays

when the field of sacred scholarship is so widely extended. The age of the Encyclopædists is past, and specialisation is imperative. And specialisation is by no means a narrowing of one's intellectual interests. For a specialist has been truly defined as "a man who knows everything about something and something about everything." Because all knowledge is interrelated, it is impossible to study one subject deeply without learning much of others. An expert is everywhere superior to a general practitioner. Sacred learning is a boundless domain ; therefore specialise. Choose your proper study betimes, and stedfastly prosecute it. At the outset of your ministry make it your ambition to be a master in some department and to be recognised in the Church as an authority there.

THE PREACHER IN HIS STUDY

II. METHODS OF STUDY

“ Libri sunt magistri qui nos instruunt sine virga et cholera, sine pannis et pecunia : si accedis, non dormiunt ; si inquirens interrogas, non abscondunt ; non remurmurant si oberres ; cachinnos nesciunt si ignores.”

RICHARD D'AUGERVILLE.

“ I believe one reason why such numerous instances of erudition occur among the lower ranks is, that, with the same powers of mind, the poor student is limited to a narrow circle for indulging his passion for books, and must necessarily make himself master of the few he possesses ere he can acquire more.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE PREACHER IN HIS STUDY

II. METHODS OF STUDY

OUR minds are like gardens ; and that a garden The may be fruitful, it needs two operations. cultiva-
tion and
nourish-
ment of
the mind. First, it must be cultivated, else it is a wilderness ; and, second, it must be fed, else the soil is thin and poor. And what husbandry is to a garden, study is to the mind ; and if it be neglected, the mind is like a barren wilderness. As Bacon puts it in a famous passage :¹ “ Reading maketh a Full Man ; Conference a Ready Man ; And Writing an Exact Man. And therefore, If a Man Write little, he had need have a Great memory ; If he Conferre little, he had need of a Present Wit ; And if he Reade little, he had need have much Cunning, to seeme to know, that he doth not.”

Study is thus most needful for every intelligent being, and for one who aspires to the

¹ *Essay L*, “ Of Studies.”

Parallel
courses
of study
in schol-
arship
and
litera-
ture.

office of a teacher, it is indispensable ; and it may be well for us to bethink ourselves what methods we may most profitably pursue. Here is a private counsel of the late Professor A. B. Bruce : “ Always be engaged in two distinct lines of study—a serious subject of scholarly research, and another of a literary nature.” Consider the reason of this.

The
day's
pro-
gramme.

Observe at the outset that in study as in every other employment method is most needful. It is a frequent complaint, intended usually as an apology for remissness, that “ there is little time for study.” And so indeed there is ; but, as some one has said, “ we have all the time there is,” and just because it is so scanty, we should the more carefully husband it and turn it to the utmost account. And the golden secret lies in that maxim of Jeanie Deans, that “ much may be done by timing one's turns.” It is only thus that the day's work can be successfully and pleasantly accomplished in any walk of life, and most especially in the Holy Ministry. The day should be mapped out, its programme fixed, and a place allotted for each office—pastoral visitation, recreation, and above all that office which is the fountain of intellectual vitality—study. And the rule is that the daily hours of

study should be apportioned between scholarship and literature.

No man is truly a student unless he be constantly employed upon some definite task, some large and worthy subject which he is ambitious to master, and which engages all his intellectual powers and scholarly resources. I. Scholastic study.

Obviously the initial step is the choice of a subject ; and here there need be no difficulty. Choice of a subject.

The sole restriction is that a minister's study should be ministerial. It must relate to his office, and since his office is the interpretation of the Christian revelation, his study must lie within that domain. And within these limits four broad fields present themselves, affording ample scope for every diversity of faculty and aptitude : (1) Sacred Criticism—the study of the literary monuments of the Faith. (2) Theology—the definition, formulation, and correlation of Christian doctrine, the truth revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ. (3) Ecclesiastical History—the *gesta Spiritus Sancti*, the gradual progress of the Kingdom of Heaven from age to age. (4) Apologetic—the exhibition of the reasonableness of the Faith, its correlation with the natural and the moral order of the world and its commendation to the ever-changing spirit of the age. There is

here a wide range of choice. Any of these fields furnishes employment for a lifetime ; and our choice is determined by our peculiar aptitudes, which, as we have already observed, it is the chief use of our College-training to disclose.

Making
a begin-
ning.

Whatever field of study one may be thus led to select, it will seem at the outset bewildering alike in its extent and in its riches ; but just make a beginning somewhere, anywhere, at the most convenient point, and the way will open out before you. Suppose, for example, you are led to the subject of Sacred Criticism. There are two common and futile methods of handling the Scriptures. One is the sporadic method—opening the Bible at random and studying isolated passages here and there. And the other is the indiscriminate method—beginning at the beginning and plodding straight through to the end. The proper method is to select one of the distinct groups of sacred literature which compose the large and various library of Holy Writ, and study it, with all available aids of scholarship, until one has mastered it. Thus, if one's bent be toward the New Testament, one might fix upon the Synoptic Gospels or the Johannine literature, or the Pauline Epistles or the Epistle

to the Hebrews. Any of these would constitute a large and engrossing study; and when one had accomplished it, not only would he have gained a precious and permanent access of sacred learning but he would be guided, by innumerable implications, to a second enterprise. Or is Theology your choice? Then address yourself to some great doctrine, like Soteriology or Christology, and investigate it, reading the classic literature and grappling with the problem. Or have you a taste for Church History? Then select a period—the Alexandrian period, or Mediæval Monasticism, or the Crusades, or the Reformation. Or are you disposed to investigate the credentials of Christianity? Then you might profitably go back to the beginning and view the question as it presented itself to the first generation of doubters by studying the early Apologists—a field which has been too much neglected and which offers a rich reward to patient and loving investigation. Or you might consider the question as it presents itself to the modern mind, and study the bearing of scientific discovery upon the Christian revelation. In every instance, you perceive, the primary necessity is twofold—a recognition of one's *métier* and a definite beginning. Know-

ledge is so organic, so interrelated in all its parts, that once a beginning is made it is easy to continue. One study suggests and demands another.

Two
practical
rules :

All that has now been said may be summarised in two practical rules.

(1) *Nulla
dies sine
linea.*

The first is that maxim of Apelles, the most celebrated of the ancient Greek painters : "Never a day without a line."¹ His art was the business of his life, and every day he handled his brush. If ever he had passed a day without touching his canvas, it would, in his judgment, have been a lost day. And what his painting was to Apelles, that his sacred study is to a true minister. It is the essential business of his life ; and every day is lost which has not its record of strenuous diligence and does not leave him, in some appreciable degree, intellectually richer than it found him.²

¹ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxx. xxxvi. : "Apelli fuit alioqui perpetua consuetudo nunquam tam occupatam diem agendi ut non lineam ducendo exerceret artem : quod ab eo in proverbium venit."

² Cf. the Younger Pliny's description of his distinguished uncle (*Epist.* iii. 5) : "On a journey, as being released from other cares, he was at leisure for this one thing. A secretary sat beside him with book and writing tablets and his hands in winter protected with mittens, that not even the severity of the weather might filch away a moment of study. And on this account also at Rome he used to be carried in a sedan chair. I remember being reproved by him for walking. 'You might,' said he, 'have avoided the loss of these hours.' For he considered every moment lost which was not bestowed on study (*nam perire omne tempus arbitrabatur quod studiis non impertiretur*)."

And here is the second rule : Be sure that, whenever one inquires " What are you engaged on at present ? " you are able to return an immediate answer, specifying some grave and truly important task, some worthy intellectual pursuit. There could hardly be a more effective test whether one be truly a student or not. What of a shipbuilder who, being asked what work he had on hand, could not point to a ship on the stocks ? or a house-builder who could not point at least to a foundation well laid according to the architect's design ? If ever one finds himself unable to name his study at the moment, then he may be a student but he is out of practice ; and a true student is never out of practice.

It is necessary, then, that a minister should be constantly engaged in some serious pursuit of sacred learning ; but observe further, it is fitting that he should at the same time prosecute some study of a lighter nature. And the reason is twofold. (1) The mind grows jaded with strenuous application, and it needs relaxation. And relaxation is not idleness ; it is an escape into a fresh atmosphere, brighter

(2) Specify your study.

II. Literary study.

The division of the New Testament into verses for his Genevan edition (1551) was made by Robert Stephens (Estienne) on horseback in the course of a journey from Paris to Lyons (cf. Gregory's *Proleg. to Tischendorf's N.T.*, p. 168).

and more exhilarating. The natural arrangement is that we should devote to serious study the earlier hours when the vigour of our faculties is unimpaired, and then seek refreshment in the closing hours when the strenuous business of the day is accomplished. (2) There is a narrowing tendency in all strictly professional study ; and a minister above all men should cultivate largeness of outlook and width of sympathy. No doubt the surest way to attain this end is by intercourse with one's fellow-men ; but hardly less effective, and so far indeed more effective as it introduces one into domains otherwise unattainable, is a knowledge of life as reflected and interpreted in noble literature. What enlargement is there for a minister in the social intercourse of a remote village ? It rather lies with him to enlarge the thoughts of his people ; and his own thoughts will inevitably be cramped by his petty surroundings unless he find avenues of communion with the broad world beyond.

Helpful
classes of
litera-
ture :

There are three classes of literature which are especially helpful in this direction and which may most profitably employ our *horæ subsecivæ*—those precious hours when one is free to seek intellectual refreshment after the strenuous labours of the day.

1. History—a fascinating and enriching study. And our own literature is adorned by not a few historical works which rank as classics and which alone would suffice to confer on one who mastered them the title of an educated man. These particularly may be mentioned : Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* ; Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* ; Macaulay's *History of England* ; Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*.

The benefit of a study of history is manifold. (1) It reinforces one's faith in God. For history is nothing else than the record of His dealings with the children of men ; and it is hardly possible to follow the progress of human affairs from generation to generation without recognising, amid seeming confusion, the operation of a steadfast and invincible purpose ever siding with righteousness and working out a larger good undreamed of at the moment. As Baron Wilhelm von Humboldt put it in that memorable epigram which Hegel took as the motto of his *Philosophy of History* : " The history of the world is not intelligible apart from a government of the world." (2) It steadies and calms us in every time of difficulty by showing us that similar ordeals have confronted our predecessors and

1. His-
tory.

Benefits
of a
study of
history.

have been surmounted by faith and courage. Knowledge of the past rebukes panic in the present and inspires hope and confidence for the future. And (3) there is this somewhat utilitarian yet in no wise inconsiderable reason why ministers should study history—that it abounds in impressive enforcements of the eternal truths which it is their office to proclaim. Thus, if you be discoursing of the overruling Providence of God, how could you more effectively exemplify it than by recalling how in 1688 the Prince of Orange purposed landing on the coast of Yorkshire and the King's troops were massed there to repel him ; but a tempest from the east drove his fleet down the Channel as far as Torbay in Devon, and there his army landed unopposed and started on its victorious march to London ? What seemed a disaster was an overruling providence.

2. Novels. 2. Novels—a peculiarly profitable department of literature. There is indeed a strong prejudice against it, at all events in pietistic circles—a decaying but deeply-rooted prejudice, a lingering survival of the Puritan spirit which reprobated John Bunyan's immortal allegory when it first appeared, accounting the writing of a work of fiction no seemly employment

for a minister of the Gospel. Nor is it a wholly unreasonable prejudice. There is no department of literature where discrimination is more needful. The value of a novel lies in this—that it is a portrayal of character, a representation and interpretation of life; and there is no more effective lesson in the conduct of life, whether in the way of example or of warning, than a just and skilful analysis of character, exhibiting the hidden principles and forces which operate in human affairs, mould human characters, and determine human destinies. For, says Browning,¹

“we’re made so that we love

First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see.”

But the work must be well done, else it is unprofitable and may be positively pernicious. A novelist creates a little society and introduces us to it; and the value of his work depends on the quality of the society which he creates. If a novel lack insight and understanding, its perusal is like keeping stupid company; if its ethical ideals be false, then, however brilliant it may be, it affects one like unwholesome

¹ *Fra Lippo Lippi*. The thought had already been expressed by St. Chrysostom. Cf. *In Joan. Hom.* xxxiii: ἡ γὰρ διάνοια τῆς συντρόφου τῶν πραγμάτων εἰκόνας ἐπιλαβομένη διανίσταται μᾶλλον καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν γραφῇ τὰ πράγματα ὁρῶσα κατέχεται μείζονως.

society. "It is certain," says Shakespeare,¹ "that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases, one of another : therefore let men take heed of their company." And so precisely is there need of discrimination in novel-reading, since it is just like company-keeping.

The
supreme
novelists.

There is a group of novelists who rank as veritable benefactors of the human race—Scott, Dickens, the Brontës, Thackeray, and George Eliot. Their works are immortal—"possessions for ever." On all their pages there is not an ignoble sentence ; and there is none of their creations that is not an inspiration of high thought and an incentive to generous action, enriching the mind and enlarging the heart. "If anywhere in another world," says Mark Rutherford,² "the blessings which men have conferred here are taken into account in distributing reward, surely the choicest in the store of the Most High will be reserved for his servant Scott ! It may be said of others that they have made the world wise or rich, but of him it must be said that *he, more than all, has made the world happier—wiser too, wiser through its happiness.*" The

¹ *Henry II* (Part 2), v. i. 84 ff.

² *Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, p. 277.

special charm of his books is the spirit of heroic chivalry which breathes through their pages. Sir Walter was the very pattern of gentlemanhood. That was a just tribute which was paid him after his death by his friend J. L. Adolphus, surely the highest that mortal man could win : " He was a gentleman even to his dogs." ¹

It is an exceeding enhancement at once of the pleasure and of the profit of novel-reading when we acquaint ourselves with the life-story of the novelist and learn how he came to write his books, reading them chronologically in the order of their production and observing how they grew out of his experience and exhibit the growth of his mind and the development of his thought. Here lies the value of a competent biography, like that of Scott by his son-in-law J. G. Lockhart, that of Dickens by his friend John Forster, that of the Brontës by Mrs. Gaskell, that of George Eliot by Mr. J. W. Cross. ²

3. Poetry. What is the essential and dis- 3. Poetry.

¹ Lockhart's *Life*, ch. lxxviii.

² Cf. J. S. Blackie's *Self-Culture*, p. 28 : " The next advice I give you with regard to books is that you should read as much as possible systematically and chronologically. Without order things will not hang together in the mind, and the most natural and instructive order is the order of genesis and growth. Read Plutarch's great Lives, for instance, from Theseus down to Cleomenes and Aratus, in chronological sequence, and you will have a much more vital sort of Greek history in your memory than either Thirlwall or Grote can supply."

tinctive quality of a poet ? It is the gift of imagination ; and imagination is the pictorial faculty. The principle is that the universe is an organism : nothing is single or isolated, and nothing is understood unless it be seen in its relation to the whole. Things present themselves separately, and where imagination is lacking, they remain unrelated. Imagination perceives their connections, and groups the multitudinous details in one complex picture. It is the touch of the creative spirit turning the seeming chaos into a cosmos. Science is poetry ; for science is the correlation of things by the discovery of their common laws. And just as in the handling of God's revelation in Nature, so in the handling of His revelation in Grace. It is a deep saying of Boccaccio, the friend of Petrarch and the biographer of Dante, that " Theology is nothing else than the poetry of God " ; and it is a plain truth that no one is competent to deal with the things of God who has not something of the poet's instinct. Learning is essential, but mere learning is insufficient. " An Athenian blockhead," said Dr. Samuel Johnson, " is the worst of all blockheads " ; and so have others said in softer phrase. " The gretteste clerkes," Chaucer has it, " been nought the

wysest men ”; and Tennyson was translating Heraclitus when he wrote that “knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.”¹ Mere learning, an accumulation of crude facts, where one “cannot see the wood for the trees,” is not scholarship. It is to scholarship as quarrying is to architecture; and what makes the difference is the poet’s gift of imagination. And therefore it is well for us to study the poets and catch their inspiration. It is true that “a poet is born, not made”; but he is born to be our teacher, quickening our dull imaginations and helping us to perceive the mystic meanings of common things.

To speak of all the fascinating domains of Bookland would be endless, and indeed it might even be unprofitable; for books are like friends in this, that every man must find his own—those which are congenial to him, suiting his aptitudes and meeting his peculiar needs. So let us pass on to some practical suggestions regarding the use of books.

Not the least of a scholar’s embarrassments is the difficulty of remembering what he has read. There is nothing more tantalising than a vague consciousness of a valuable reference which one is unable to ascertain; and accurate

Practical
sug-
gestions.

Aids in
reading.

¹ Diog. Laert. *Heracl.* ix. 1 : πολυμαθὴν νόον οὐ διδάσκει.

remembrance would obviate many a long and sometimes unsuccessful search. Here are three serviceable remedies.

1. De-
libera-
tion.

I. Read deliberately—carefully, attentively, and slowly. Remember Plato's maxim that "it is better to accomplish a little well than much inadequately."¹ It is not what is read that avails but what is assimilated; and one good book mastered profits more than a library skimmed over. The faculty of mastering a book at a glance is a rare gift, bestowed only on reviewers. "I never," says F. W. Robertson,² "knew but one or two fast readers and readers of many books, whose knowledge was worth anything." And Marcus Aurelius, the Philosophic Emperor, tells us³ that one of the lessons which he learned from his teacher Rusticus was "to read accurately and not to be content with a superficial survey."

2. Read
the best
books.

2. Confine yourself in the main to the best literature. This is a counsel of that excellent bookman Seneca. "Always," he wrote in one of his wise letters,⁴ "read approved books; and if ever you fancy turning aside to others, come back to the former." "Some Bookes," says Bacon, "are to be Tasted, Others to be

¹ *Theæt.* 187 E.

² *Letter* clv. (vol. ii. p. 197).

³ i. 7.

⁴ *Epist.* ii: "Probatos itaque semper lege: et si quando ad alios divertere libuerit, ad priores redi."

Swallowed, and Some Few to be Chewed and Digested : That is, some Bookes are to be read onely in Parts ; Others to be read but not Curiously ; And some Few to be read wholly, and with Diligence and Attention.”¹ “A good Booke,” as Milton has told us, “is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm’d and treasur’d up on purpose to a life beyond life” ; and such a book merits close, patient, and reverent study, and richly rewards it.

3. Employ mnemonic aids. Since your natural memory is insufficient, create an artificial memory. There are some authors who provide such aid to their readers in the form of exhaustive indexes ; and indeed no book which is worth writing should lack this equipment. It was commoner in earlier and more leisurely days ; and here the Elzevirs and the Benedictines have set an example to succeeding generations. The task of those old scholars was always a true labour of love ; and they have furnished the ponderous folios of the ancients with elaborate indexes which enable the student to lay his finger in a moment on a required reference. But when this aid is lacking, the student may supply it for himself ; and here are three effective devices.

3. Mnemonic aids.

¹ *Essay L, “Of Studies.”*

(1) Book-
marking.

(1) Mark your books. Practise a neat system of marginal notation which, without disfiguring the pages, will indicate specially important and valuable passages and will catch your eye whenever you run it through the volume. This is no novel device. It is an ancient practice of book-lovers, and it is interesting to observe that it was employed by Seneca and the Elder Pliny.¹

(2) An
Inter-
leaved
Bible.

(2) Nor were they content with marking their books: they made extracts from them.² This is a helpful practice, and especially serviceable here is an Interleaved Bible. Whatever illustrative or elucidative of the Scriptures you may encounter in the course of your reading, enter it over against the proper passage; and presently you will find an original and invaluable commentary growing under your hand. An Interleaved Bible is an indispensable equipment for a preacher.

(3) Another device for retaining what one

¹ Cf. Sen. *Epist.* vi: "Imponam notas ut ad ea ipsa protinus quæ probo et miror, accedas." Pliny, *Epist.* III. v: "Post cibum sæpe (quem interdum levem et facilem veterum more sumebat) æstate, si quid otii, jacebat in sole, liber legebatur, adnotabat excerpebatque. Nihil unquam legit quod non excerperet." Several New Testament passages are plainly readers' marginal notes interpolated into the text by later copyists; e.g. Jo. v. 4, vii. 53-viii. 11.

² Cf. Pliny as above. Sen. *Epist.* ii: "Et cum multa percurreris, unum excerpe quod illo die concoquas. Hoc ipse quoque facio: ex pluribus quæ lego, aliquid apprehendo."

reads is an *Index Rerum* or Commonplace Book ^{(3) A Common-place Book.}—a substantial notebook with its pages apportioned between the letters of the alphabet, where you may inscribe valuable references under convenient headings. It quickly becomes a rich and ever-increasing treasury ; and whatever subject you may have occasion to deal with, you have only to open it and you will find a deep thought or a felicitous phrase to enforce or adorn your argument. Joseph Addison employed this device, and without it he could hardly have produced his *Spectator*—those diurnal essays which for two centuries have instructed and delighted the world. In No. 157 he reveals his method. He is writing on “ Greatness,” and he resorts to his storehouse. “ My Commonplace Book,” he says, “ directs me on this occasion to mention the Dawning of Greatness in Alexander, who being asked in his Youth to contend for a Prize in the Olympick Games, answer’d that he would, if he had Kings to run against him.” And he finds yet other examples in rich profusion, as Cassius, Scipio, Marius. This is the use of a Commonplace Book. It is like a Bank where one stores one’s earnings to be drawn forth at need.

THE PREACHER IN HIS STUDY

III. SERMON PREPARATION

“Such was the solicitude of Pericles when he had to speak in public, that he always first addressed a prayer to the gods, that not a word might unawares escape him unsuitable to the occasion.”

PLUTARCH.

“When I was occupied upon *The Creation*, always before I sat down to the piano I prayed God with earnestness that He would enable me to praise Him worthily.”

JOSEPH HAYDN.

THE PREACHER IN HIS STUDY

III. SERMON PREPARATION

EVERY sort of study has a practical end in view. The making of sermons the chief end of ministerial study. A physician studies medicine with a view to healing ; a lawyer studies law for the righting of wrong and the vindication of justice ; an engineer studies mechanics that he may apply the forces of nature to the uses of civilisation ; a baker learns the art of baking that he may make bread. And in like manner a preacher practises godly learning that he may be “ a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, ^{2 Tim. ii. 15.} handling aright the word of truth.” His study is his workshop, and sermons are its product ; and unless they issue in good preaching, his intellectual activities are missing their primary end. The making of sermons is the *raison d'être* of all our traffic in books ; and now we shall consider how this all-important office may be successfully accomplished.

There are two characteristics of an effective

Two
rules :

sermon, and these prescribe two rules which a sermon-maker should bear in mind and endeavour to fulfil.

I. Be
inter-
esting.

I. A sermon should be interesting. A preacher who wearies his hearers has missed the primary condition of success.

An in-
teresting
theme
insuffi-
cient.

Of course it is necessary, if one would awaken interest, that one should speak of interesting things ; and is it not surprising that it should be possible for a Christian preacher to fail in view not merely of the transcendent interest of the themes which it is his privilege to handle—the amazing love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord and the gladness which it brings, but of the hunger of the human soul, its craving for peace, and its longing for a voice from the Eternal amid the confusion of this dark and painful life ? It is strange yet it is true ; and hence it appears that an interesting theme is not in itself sufficient.

Nor yet
the
preacher's
personal
interest
in it.

What more is needed ? There is a lesson for preachers in Matthew Arnold's *Caution to Poets* :

“ What poets feel not, when they make,
A pleasure in creating,
The world, in *its* turn, will not take
Pleasure in contemplating.”

If we would reach the hearts of our hearers,

we must speak to them of truths which have touched and gladdened our own. This is an essential condition of interesting preaching ; nevertheless neither is this in itself sufficient. There is many a sermon out of a full heart which fails to win an entrance into other hearts, inasmuch as the preacher lacks the art of arresting and attractive presentation.

This art we should study ; and here are two counsels which a preacher should have before him in the preparation of his sermons. The art of presentation.

(1) Choose your text judiciously. Much depends on this, more perhaps than is generally recognised. It is a Greek proverb that " the beginning is half of the whole,"¹ " well begun is half done " ; and the value of a striking text is that it arrests attention and awakens expectancy at the very outset. And then the battle is half won. (1) The choice of a text.

A very effective device is a felicitous and suggestive combination of passages. For example, suppose you take as your text St. John iii. 16. This golden verse is perhaps the least effective text in the Bible, just because it is so familiar. Watch the faces of your Combination of passages.

¹ ἀρχὴ ἡμισυ παντός. Cf. Plat. *Leg.* vi. 2 ; Luc. *Somm.* 3. The proverb is as old as Hesiod ; cf. Luc. *Hermot.* 2.

congregation as you announce it, and you will observe their listless and unexpectant expression. There is nothing in the familiar words to excite curiosity or arrest attention. But couple it with that other verse—St. John xvii. 9: “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me,” and you will see a gleam of surprise on your hearers’ faces. “Ah!” they say, “here is something fresh: what may this mean?—‘God so loved the world’: ‘I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me.’” You have excited their curiosity and engaged their attention, and it will be your own fault if you fail in winning a welcome for the impressive message of that seeming contradiction.

Examples. Take several other examples by way of illustrating the method:

St. Mark x. 37; xv. 27: “They say unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory.” “And with Him they crucify two thieves; the one on His right hand, and the other on His left.” **THE MERCY OF UNANSWERED PRAYER.**

Exod. xxiii. 9; Heb. iv. 15, 16: “Thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers

in the land of Egypt.” “We have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the Throne of Grace.” THE SYMPATHY OF THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.

St. John vi. 12 ; Rom. viii. 32 : “He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.” “He that spared not His own Son.” THE PARSIMONY AND THE PRODIGALITY OF GOD.

Gen. iii. 10 ; Rev. xxii. 20 : “I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid . . . ; and I hid myself.” “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” MAN’S FIRST WORD TO GOD IN THE BIBLE AND HIS LAST.

St. Matt. viii. 20 ; St. John xix. 30 : “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of Man hath not where to *lay down His head* (ποῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν κλίνει).” “He said, It is finished : and He *laid down His head* (κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν), and gave up the ghost.” THE REST OF THE UNRESTING SAVIOUR : a Communion Sermon.

St. Mark iv. 36b ; 1 Tim. iv. 10 : “And there were also with Him other little ships.” “The Saviour of all men, specially of those

that believe." COMPANIONSHIP WITH CHRIST AND FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM.

Col. iv. 18 ; 2 Tim. ii. 9 : "Remember my bonds." "But the Word of God is not bound." THE BOUND PREACHER AND THE UNBOUND WORD.

St. John xi. 35 ; 1 Thess. v. 16 : "Jesus wept (*ἐδάκρυσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς*)." "Rejoice evermore (*πάντοτε χαίρετε*)"—the shortest verse in the English New Testament and the shortest in the Greek. HIS SORROW OUR JOY.

St. John viii. 12 ; St. Matt. v. 14 : "I am the light of the world." "Ye are the light of the world." REFLECTING CHRIST.

St. John iii. 16 ; 1 John ii. 15 : "God so loved the world." "Love not the world." WORLDLINESS AND UNWORLDLINESS.

(2) The use of illustrations.

Mt. xiii.
34.

(2) Illustrate your argument. There is nothing more effective in preaching than apt and skilful illustration ; and here our Lord has set us an example. "All these things," it is written, "spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes ; and without a parable spake He nothing unto them." His parables were His illustrations of the heavenly truths which He proclaimed ; and they were more, much more, than mere anecdotes. His parabolic teaching

was the application of a profound principle ; and what was this principle ?

Remember what is written in the Book of Exodus of the building of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness—how there was vouchsafed to Moses on Mount Sinai a vision of the Heavenly Courts, and he was then charged to construct the Tabernacle after that model.

“ See,” was the thrice reiterated command, “ that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount.” And this was ever afterwards the wonder and glory of their earthly Sanctuary in the eyes of the Israelites—that it was an image of the Sanctuary not made with hands, the Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, and its ordinances were “ a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.”

The
earthly
Sanctuary
a copy
of the
Heavenly.

xxv. 40,
xxvi. 30,
xxvii. 8.

Heb. viii.
ix.

And the idea was extended farther. The Universe is the Temple of the Creator, and earth is “ a copy and shadow of Heaven.” This is expressed by a deep saying in that most beautiful of the Old Testament Apocrypha, the Book of Ecclesiasticus : “ Thus look upon all the works of the Most High ; two and two, one against another ” ; “ All things are double one against another ; and He hath made nothing imperfect.” There are two worlds,

Earth
the
counter-
part of
Heaven.

xxxiii. 15,
xlii. 24.

the seen and the unseen, and they are related to each other as shadow to substance, as symbol to reality. This is just Plato's doctrine of Ideas, "the fundamental essences of things, in virtue of which they are what they are";¹ and Mrs. Browning has expressed the thought in that passage of *Aurora Leigh* where she protests against the blunder of "many thinkers of this age, aye, many Christian teachers half in heaven," who have understood

"Our natural world too insularly, as if
No spiritual counterpart completed it,
Consummating its meaning, rounding all
To justice and perfection, line by line,
Form by form, nothing single or alone,
The great below clenched by the great above."

Every earthly thing has its heavenly counterpart. There are two worlds—the natural and the spiritual, the seen and the unseen; and each is the counterpart of the other, and without the other neither is complete.

Our
Lord's
recognition
of
this
principle.

The eternal world is the real world, and the world of sense is but the shadow which it casts. And hence emerges a principle: If we would know the eternal world, then we must consider its shadow and from the shadow pass to the substance. That was our Lord's method. It is the principle underlying His parabolic

¹ Cf. Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, i. pp. 26 ff.

teaching. He pointed to each familiar thing, and bade His hearers recognise it as an image of the unseen and eternal.

“ The Lake,

The lonely peaks, the valleys, lily-lit,
Were synagogues. The simplest sights we met—
The Sower flinging seed on loam and rock ;
The darnel in the wheat ; the mustard-tree
That hath its seed so little, and its boughs
Widespreading ; and the wandering sheep ; and nets
Shot in the wimpled waters,—drawing forth
Great fish and small :—these, and a hundred such,
Seen by us daily, never seen aright,
Were pictures for Him from the page of life,
Teaching by parable.

For, nowise else,

Taught He the people ; since a light is set
Safest in lanterns ; and the things of Earth
Are copies of the things in Heaven, more close,
More clear, more near, more intricately linked,
More subtly, than men guess. Mysterious,
Finger on lip,—whispering to wistful ears,—
Nature doth shadow Spirit.”¹

The principle underlies all His teaching. Thus, would we conceive of Heaven ? Then, said He, look at your earthly home with its sweet affections, and recognise there the shadow of Heaven. Heaven is the Eternal Home, and therefore He called it “ the Father’s House.” Again, would we conceive of God ? Then look at a human father, so strong and wise and

¹ Sir Edwin Arnold, *The Light of the World*.

Eph. iii.
14, 15.

kind, and recognise there the shadow of God. For God is "the Heavenly Father," the Archetype of Fatherhood, "the Father from whom all fatherhood in Heaven and on earth derives its name." He is all that a human father is at the best, all that and infinitely more; for "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Remember how He expressed it in His grand argument *a fortiori*: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"

Mt. vii.
11.

The
rationale
of homi-
letic
illustra-
tions.

This is the *rationale* of homiletic illustrations. An evangelical truth is never a remote mystery: it is always the heavenly counterpart of an earthly experience; and an illustration is an exhibition of the connection between the earthly and the heavenly. A parable means properly "a comparison," a setting of the heavenly reality and its earthly copy side by side; and when this is truly and effectively accomplished, then two inestimable gains ensue. On the one hand, the reasonableness of the heavenly truth appears; for it is seen to be rooted in the natural order and is re-

cognised as the other and higher side of a familiar experience. And, on the other hand, a new glory is revealed in every common thing ; for every common thing is recognised as a shadow and type of the eternal.

“ Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God ;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes.”

Thus the art of illustration has at once a homiletic and an apologetic use. Our Lord’s parabolic teaching is the supreme example of the former ; and perhaps the most impressive examples of the latter are Bishop Butler’s monumental work, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, and Henry Drummond’s *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*.

II. This, then, is the first rule of sermon-making : a sermon should be interesting. And the second is that a sermon should have a definite purpose.

II. A definite purpose.

It will explain and enforce the lesson if we consider two maxims of a distinguished preacher of last generation :¹

Two maxims :

I. “ There are two ideals of a sermon—one, *to do justice to your subject* ; the other, *to do*

I. Two ideals of a sermon.

¹ The late Dr. A. Orrock Johnstone of Westbourne Church, Glasgow.

justice to your hearers." The former disposition is a common error with beginners, especially such as have scholarly instincts. They are apt to overload their sermons. They see so much in the passage, and they are anxious to communicate its full riches ; and the result is that they confuse and bewilder their hearers. The fact requiring recognition here is that there is no passage of Holy Scripture but contains a wealth of instruction ; and therefore, whatever passage may engage us, we should select a particular phase of its abundant significance and direct attention to that. What though we do not exhaust our text ? Better so than exhaust our hearers. Be content to unfold one aspect of the truth at a time ; and resume the passage again and yet again, and unfold more and more of its *πολυποίκιλος σοφία*, its "manifold," "its richly woven wisdom." There are few texts which will not furnish many sermons. Therefore concentrate always on a single lesson, and make its enforcement your definite aim.

Eph. iii.
10.

2. A
speech
conclud-
ing with
a motion.

2. "A sermon should be like a speech concluding with a motion." How does a speaker proceed when he is charged with the duty of submitting and commending a motion to a public assemblage ? First of all, he states

the motion ; then he “ speaks to it,” explaining and commending it ; and, finally, he submits it. This is the method of preaching. First you state your motion, and this you do when you read your text and announce your subject ; then you “ speak to your motion,” and this is your sermon—an exposition and commendation of the truth which you desire your hearers to accept ; and, finally, you “ submit your motion ” in your closing appeal when you present the issue—a plain issue to be accepted or rejected.

Observe, the primary necessity is a definite motion. You must see your goal at the outset and steadfastly make for it until you attain it. Be sure that, when you are done, your hearers feel that a clear issue has been presented to them, a distinct call which they must either accept or refuse. A sermon has failed if they say afterwards : “ I could carry nothing away.” And so here is a sure test of a sermon : *Can you give it a title?* If you cannot, the reason is that you do not know precisely what your motion is ; and how then can your hearers know ? It may be that, when you bethink yourself what your sermon is about, you recognise that it is about several matters ; and then you must make several sermons of it.

Test of
a sermon.

THE PREACHER IN THE PULPIT

I. THE PULPIT SPIRIT

“ ‘ Oh,’ saith one of the ancient doctors, ‘ if Christ had but committed to my keeping one spoonful of His blood in a fragile glass, how curious should I preserve it, and how tender should I be of that glass ! ’ If, then, He have committed to me the purchase of His blood, should I not as carefully look to my charge ? ”

RICHARD BAXTER.

THE PREACHER IN THE PULPIT

I. THE PULPIT SPIRIT

THE word "pulpit" occurs only once in Holy ^{The} Scripture. It is written that, after the re-^{word} turned exiles had accomplished the heavy task "pulpit."
of rebuilding the ruined wall of Jerusalem, they convened "in the broad place that was ^{Neh viii.} before the Water Gate," and "Ezra the Scribe ^{4.} stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose," and read to them from the Book of the Law. The Hebrew word here is *migdal*, which signifies "a tower." Ezra's "pulpit" was not a regular institution. It is ^{ix. 4.} styled presently *ma'aleh*, "a platform" or "scaffolding," literally "an ascent"; and it was a mere improvisation to serve the occasion. There was no pulpit in the earlier worship of Israel. Its scene was the Temple, and its ministers were priests, not preachers. They busied themselves about the altar, and had no need of a pulpit. It was in the days of the Scribes that preaching became the central

office of Jewish worship ; and it was in the synagogues that the pulpit was established as a regular institution. The novelty required a name ; and since it was among the Hellenistic Jews, remote from the Temple, that the synagogal system chiefly prevailed, they naturally, in this instance as in many others, borrowed a Greek term. The Greek name for a judge's tribunal was *bema*, and the Scribes adopted it and so designated their preacher's platform in the synagogue. As we have seen, Christian preaching was modelled on Greek rhetoric ; and the Church, while retaining the Jewish term *bema* or its Latin equivalent *tribunal* and the Greek variant *ambo*,¹ employed also the term *pulpitum*, which was a common name for the rhetorician's rostrum.² And this is the name which has persisted to our day.

What matters not the pulpit but the pulpit-spirit. Mt. v. 1, 2 ; Lk. v. 1-3.

Our Lord frequently preached from the *bema* of a synagogue during His Galilean ministry, but generally He had no pulpit. He would sit on the hillside and discourse to the multitude ; and once, when they pressed about Him on the shore of the Lake, He got into Peter's boat and, pushing off a little way, sat in her and taught them. And when He visited

¹ ἀμβων, from ἀναβαίνειν, equivalent to *ma'aleh*, "ascent." Cf. Bingham. *Antiq.* VIII. iii. 4.

² Cf. Epict. *Dissert.* III. xxiii. 35.

Jerusalem, He would stand in the outer court of the Temple and speak to the people gathered round Him. St. Paul, too, would preach in the synagogue, but it was mostly in the streets and market-places that he preached. And the lesson is that a formal pulpit is a mere convenience and not a necessity. What matters is not the place but the preaching; and, as we have seen, the efficacy of the preaching lies in the spirit of the preacher. It is not the mere word that tells; it is the personality behind the word. It is the man that makes the message.

“Common words, perhaps;

The ministers in church might say the same;

But *he*, he made the church with what he spoke,—

The difference was the miracle.”¹

It is the preaching that avails. The pulpit is merely the preacher's platform; and what matters is the spirit which animates him. And this is determined by two conditions—his attitude toward his hearers and his attitude toward his Lord.

I. *The preacher's attitude toward his hearers.* Perhaps the lessons to be inculcated here may be most effectively introduced by a quotation from that noblest of all books on the Holy Ministry—*The Reformed Pastor*, a series

Cf. Ac.
xvii. 17.

The
preacher's
attitude
toward
his
hearers.

¹ E. B. Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, iii.

of discourses delivered at Worcester on December 4, 1665, to the ministers of that county by Richard Baxter, that most eminent of the Puritan Divines, "the chief of the English Protestant schoolmen," as he has been justly designated.

Richard
Baxter.

Eph. v.
16, R.V.
marg.

If ever a man was pre-eminently qualified to speak on this high theme, that man was surely Richard Baxter. He was a veritable miracle of sanctified erudition. The victim from childhood of a painful and incurable disease, he "lived and preached," as he says, "in some continual expectation of death"; and this very apprehension inspired him, in the Apostle's phrase, to "buy up the opportunity" by resolute devotion. A feeble sufferer, he lived through the Commonwealth, the Restoration, and the Revolution, bearing a large part in their toils and triumphs and tribulations, and attaining the age of seventy-five years; and when he died, he left behind him no fewer than 168 volumes, all abidingly valuable and several ranking as religious classics. He possessed, moreover, this supreme qualification as a ministerial counsellor, that his personal ministry was singularly owned of God. Its principal scene was the town of Kidderminster, where he laboured for two-and-twenty years

(1640-62). It was the boast of the Emperor Augustus that he found Rome a city of brick, and left it a city of marble, but Baxter could boast a nobler achievement : he found Kidderminster a spiritual desert and left it a garden of the Lord. " When he came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on His name ; and when he came away, there was not past one family in the side of a street that did not so." ¹

Of this truly apostolic ministry *The Reformed Pastor* discovers the secret. To this day—pardon a personal testimony—I recall my first reading of it as no less than an epoch in my ministry ; and I would now place before you one of its burning sentences. " Look," says Baxter,² " upon your congregations believingly, and with compassion. Oh, speak not one cold or careless word about so great a business as heaven or hell ! " This appeal gripped me and haunted me when first I read it at the outset of my ministry. I had it placarded on the wall of my Vestry that it might greet my eyes every time I approached my Pulpit ; and it taught me three lessons which, as it seems to me, every preacher should learn and lay to heart.

Quotation from
The Reformed Pastor.

¹ *Reliq. Baxt.* i. i. § 136.

² Ch. v, p. 312.

I. Faith
in one's
hearers :

I. "Look upon your congregations believingly." It is not *faith in God* that is here enjoined, needful as that is. What Baxter means is rather *faith in one's hearers*. And this is hardly less needful ; indeed it is essential to successful preaching. And a preacher's faith in his hearers is twofold.

(I) In
their
spiritual
possi-
bilities.

(I) *A recognition of their spiritual possibilities*. There is hardly anything more mischievous than a bad phrase, and none has done more damage to the Gospel than that still current phrase "the total depravity of human nature." It is comparatively modern ; and it is—at all events as it is generally and naturally construed—nothing else than a perversion of the Christian truth. For it suggests that in fallen man there is nothing good, nothing that is not hateful in God's sight ; and this is in no wise the doctrine of our Lord and His Apostles. Is it not written that "God so loved the world"—this world of lost sinners—loved it so dearly that He redeemed it by the infinite sacrifice of His Eternal Son ? And He would not, He could not, have so loved it had there not been in it something lovable, some germ at least of goodness. This has been recognised by evangelical teachers in every generation ; and the phrase of the Re-

formed theologians, including the Westminster Divines, was not "total depravity" but "the corruption of the whole man (*totius hominis corruptio*)."

The idea is accurately defined by the scriptural metaphor that sin is spiritual disease, Christ being the physician, Grace the medicine, and Salvation healing; and as disease enfeebles not alone the member where it has its seat but the whole body, so sin is "the corruption of the whole man." Yet even as in a sick man there is still life, and where there is life there is hope, so in the worst sinner there remains, in the phrase of the Mystics, a *scintilla*, a *Fünklein*, "a divine spark." "As a sculptor," wrote Dr. Johann Tauler in the fourteenth century, "is said to have exclaimed indignantly on seeing a rude block of marble: 'What a godlike beauty thou hidest!' thus God looks upon man in whom God's own image is hidden."

And this is Baxter's thought when he bids us "look upon our congregations believingly." It is the faith which animates every truly Christian preacher, and Henry Septimus Sutton has movingly expressed it in his exquisite verses "A Preacher's Soliloquy":

A note
of evan-
gelical
preach-
ing.

"Glory to God, who hath assign'd
To me this mixture with mankind !

Glory to God, that I am born
 Into a world, whose palace-gates
 So many royal ones adorn !
 Heaven's possible novitiates,
 With self-subduing freedom free,
 Princely ye are, each one, to me,
 Each of secret kingly blood,
 Though not inheritors as yet
 Of all your own right royal things ;
 For it were folly to forget
 That they alone are queens and kings
 Who are the truly good.
 Yet are ye angels in disguise,
 Angels who have not found your wings. . . .
 Alas ! why will ye not from sin arise,
 And be CHRIST's beautiful ? "

This is faith in the possibilities of one's hearers, and it is an essential note of truly evangelical preaching. For the Gospel is a message of boundless and universal hope ; and it is so because it recognises a sovereign efficacy in the Saviour's grace and an inextinguishable capacity for God in every human soul, even the vilest.

(2) In
 their
 respon-
 siveness.

But faith in one's hearers is more than a recognition of their possibilities : it is also (2) *a persuasion of their responsiveness*. In every human soul there is not merely a capacity for God but, unconscious though it may be, a profound need of God and a yearning after Him. *Fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*, "Thou hast

made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it find rest in Thee." And hence surely, whenever a preacher faces a congregation, he should realise that there is not one of his hearers who is not, on the lowest reckoning, *a seeker after Christ*. It is their need of a Saviour that has brought them to the House of Prayer ; and he should recognise this, and assume that their sympathies are on his side and their hearts are open to his message. Our business in the pulpit is not to prove the Gospel but to proclaim it, not to defend it but to commend it, not to apologise for it but to glory in it. Every human soul needs Christ and is, consciously or unconsciously, hungering for Him ; and a preacher who truly exhibits Him in the wonder of His grace is sure of a glad response.

2. "Look upon your congregations," says Baxter, "with compassion." In modern speech ^{2. Compassion for one's hearers :} compassion means "pity" ; and thus interpreted the exhortation is one which preachers ^{(1) Pity.} should lay well to heart. Who that has read it can ever forget that passage where the Father of History relates ¹ how, in the course of his advance upon Greece, the Persian tyrant encamped at Abydos on the Hellespont, and

¹ Herod. ix. 44 ff.

there reviewed his armada of 10,000 ships and his host of 3,000,000 men? Seated high on a marble throne, he surveyed the vast armament; and first, says the historian, he "felicitated himself, but presently he wept." And when his councillor Artabanus inquired the reason, he answered: "Pity entered into me when I considered how short is the span of human life, since of these, so many as they are, not one will survive a hundred years hence." "Ay," said the aged councillor, "but this is more piteous still—that the calamities which befall us and the maladies which afflict us in its course, make life, brief as it is, seem all too long." View it how we may, there is an infinite pathos in human life, and to a considerate eye a throng of faces is always a moving spectacle. It is written again and again of our Lord that, "when He saw the multitudes, He had compassion"; and surely we are destitute of understanding if we can look upon an assemblage of our fellows untouched by "the sense of tears in mortal things," without yearning over them and longing to tell them lovingly of the Saviour who for our sake bore "the weary and the bitter weight of all this unintelligible world."

Mt. ix.
36, xiv.
14; Mk.
v. 34.

Perhaps, however, there is a deeper meaning

in this exhortation. In Baxter's day compassion meant more than "pity." It still retained something of its original and proper signification of "sympathy" or "fellow-feeling." And so we find it frequently in King James's Version of the Scriptures; for example, in that passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews v. 2. where a true priest is defined as one "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." There lies the secret of priestly compassion: "he himself is compassed with infirmity." He shares the weakness of his fellow-men, and he "knows what their temptations are; for he has felt the same."

But this is not all. Priestly compassion is more than a confession of the preacher's fellowship with his hearers in a common heritage of weakness and failure. It is a glad testimony to his own blessed experience of that strength which is made perfect in the weakness of poor sinners and that love which makes them more than conquerors. This is preaching.

"I love to tell the story:
More wonderful it seems
Than all the golden fancies
Of all my golden dreams.

(2) Fellow-feeling.

Testimony to the efficacy of grace.

I love to tell the story :
 It did so much for me ;
 And that is just the reason
 I tell it now to thee."

This is preaching—commendation of the Saviour from personal experience of the efficacy of His grace.

3. A sense of the solemnity of our charge.

3. Finally, Baxter counsels us to realise the solemnity of our charge as ambassadors of Christ and the awfulness of the issues which we are commissioned to present. "Oh, speak not," he pleads, "one cold or careless word about so great a business as heaven or hell !"

Baxter's own spirit.

That was the spirit which animated himself in his preaching and all his ministry ; and he has told us what it was that so possessed him with it. It was his bodily infirmity, which had kept ever before him the uncertainty of life, "this hasty Inch of Time," and the proximity of Eternity. "It made me," he says, "study and preach *things necessary*, and a little stirred up my sluggish heart, to speak to sinners with some compassion, as a dying man to dying men." "Being nearer to death and another world, I am the more regardful of those things which my everlasting life or death depend on. Having most to do with ignorant miserable people, I am commanded

by my charity and reason to treat with them of that which their salvation lieth on ; and not to dispute with them of formalities and niceties, when the question is presently to be determined whether they shall dwell for ever in heaven or in hell.”¹

It may be that there is here a flavour of morbidity, and that the Puritan conception of human destiny belongs to an obsolete phase of religious thought ; but should we not beware lest, in discarding outworn formulæ and repudiating the lurid crudities of popular theology, we ignore the awful truths which the New Testament proclaims ? Pray consider this : It may be that we are disposed to look askance at the old antithesis of “ heaven and hell,” but in the very words “ life,” “ death,” “ eternity,” “ salvation,” is there not an infinite solemnity which no modification of theological definition can ever diminish ? And is it not written on every page of the New Testament that it makes a momentous difference here and a still more momentous difference hereafter what relation a sinner holds to Christ ? And is it not supremely significant that the most awful declarations which are contained in the Holy Scriptures regarding

The
awful-
ness of
the
Gospel.

¹ *Reliq. Baxt.* I. i. §§ 32 ; 137. 2 ; 213. 2.

the doom of the impenitent, were uttered, not by Prophets or Apostles, but by our Lord's own blessed lips? It was He that spoke of a sin which "hath never forgiveness, neither in this world nor in that which is to come"; of "a worm which dieth not and a fire which is not quenched"; of a retribution so terrible that "it were better for that man if he had never been born." It is told of brave old Samuel Johnson that, as he lay a-dying, he was "much oppressed by the fear of death." "You seem, sir," a friend remonstrated, "to forget the merits of our Redeemer." "Madam," he replied, "I do not forget the merits of my Redeemer; but my Redeemer has said that He will set some on His right and some on His left."

A message for perishing sinners.

It is true, it is gloriously true, that the Gospel is the message of the love of God; but let us never forget that it is a message not simply of love but of *redeeming* love, and if we would comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height of that love, we must recognise what lies behind it—the curse of sin, that awful curse which is measured not alone by the ruin which it entails but by the infinite sacrifice which it cost God to make salvation possible for us. We may make light

of sin in our preaching of the love of God, but He did not make light of it when He "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." The Gospel is a message of salvation for perishing sinners ; and no preaching has ever been or ever will be greatly owned of God without the apostolic note of tender and urgent insistence : " Now then we are ^{2 Cor.} ambassadors for Christ, as though God did ^{v. 20.} beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The late Dr. Dale of Birmingham has left it on record that, when Mr. D. L. Moody visited the city in the seventies of last century, he was at first inclined to regard his work with disfavour and hold aloof from it ; but he attended one of his meetings, and presently his misgivings were dispelled. And, he says, what won him and persuaded him that Moody was a true preacher of the Evangel was this—that " he could never speak of a lost soul without tears in his eyes."

Brethren, " look upon your congregations believingly, and with compassion. Oh, speak not one cold or careless word about so great a business as heaven or hell ! "

II. *The preacher's attitude toward his Lord.*

The
preacher's
attitude
toward
his Lord.

A quota-
tion
from
Euthy-
mius
Ziga-
benus.

ii. 41-52.

This is supremely important. Indeed it is this that determines his attitude toward his hearers.

Here again let a quotation introduce the lesson. It is a sentence from a gracious though little known work—a Greek commentary on the Gospels by Euthymius Zigabenus, a devout and learned monk of Constantinople in the reign of Alexius Comnenus II. (1081-1118 A.D.);¹ and it occurs in his exposition of St. Luke's story of our Lord's first celebration of the Feast of the Passover on His attaining the age of twelve years. When the Galilean pilgrims set forth on their homeward journey, He remained in Jerusalem. It was not till the close of the first day's march that His parents missed Him; and returning in anxious quest, they found Him in the *Beth Midrash*—the Rabbinical College where some eight years later Saul of Tarsus sat at the feet of Gamaliel²—listening with eager interest to the Doctors and astonishing them by the intelligence of His questions. They wondered at the heavenly wisdom of the Child, but still more would they have wondered had they known Who He was—the Eternal Son of God Incarnate.

¹ The unhappy Emperor who figures in Scott's *Count Robert of Paris*.

² Cf. my *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, p. 26.

“Therefore,” counsels the good monk, “let us who are teachers fear, recognising that in our midst is the Christ, attending how we teach.”¹

There is the true pulpit-spirit. Realise that Christ is in your audience, that He is “in the midst, attending how you teach”; preach with the consciousness that He is present, observing your every movement and hearing your every word; and this will elevate your thought and speech and bearing. The realisation of His unseen presence is the grand secret of spiritual power. It arrests and impresses every hearer. It is told of that saint and scholar of the Secession Church in the eighteenth century, John Brown of Haddington, author of the once famous *Dictionary of the Bible* and great-grandfather of that Edinburgh physician of fragrant memory, the author of *Rab and His Friends*, that David Hume once heard him preach, and afterwards, sceptic as he was, he remarked: “That’s the man for me: he means what he says; he speaks as if Jesus Christ was at his elbow.”² That is the secret of preaching. Indeed it is the very soul of religion. “I hope,” says Erskine of

Realisation of the Lord's presence.

¹ φοβηθῶμεν οὖν οἱ διδάσκαλοι, γινώσκοντες ὅτι ἐν τῷ μέσῳ ἡμῶν ἐστὶ, ὁ Χριστὸς προσέχων πῶς διδάσκουμεν.

² John Brown, M.D., *Horæ Subsecivæ*, p. 60.

Linlathen,¹ "you know what it is to be sensible of the presence of God. Religion seems to me to consist in that."

The use
of the
Vestry.

Is it necessary to observe that this attitude must be habitual? It is only as we continually abide in the Lord's presence that we shall realise it in the office of preaching. The pulpit-spirit is not like a vestment which one puts on ere entering the pulpit and puts off on leaving it. Nevertheless it is most needful that there should be nothing to distract a preacher's mind or disturb his heart while he is addressing himself to his high service; and here is the sacred use of the Vestry. A Vestry is an absolute necessity in the equipment of a Church; and it should be scrupulously reserved for its proper function. And what is its function? A Vestry or *Vestiarium* means literally "a wardrobe," the chamber where the ecclesiastical vestments are stored and where the preacher arrays himself ere entering the pulpit. But the robe and cassock are merely symbols of his spiritual adornment, and the Vestry is truly the chamber where he arrays himself in the garments of faith and love and peace. It is a secret place where he may be alone with God for a little season. It is his

¹ *Letters*, p. 53.

“ oratory,” and it should be preserved sacred from invasion. Once he has entered it and shut the door, it should be understood that he is engaged with the Master, and none should intrude on any errand, whether of business or of friendship. A preacher should see the face of God ere he looks on the faces of his hearers, and should pass straight to his pulpit from the Presence Chamber.

There is, however, one visitor who has the right of entry to the Vestry—the leader of the service of praise. And what is his errand thither? It should not be the arrangement of that service. This should always be settled in the course of the previous week, that the choir and the conductor may prepare for the fitting performance of their office; and the latter’s errand to the Vestry on the Lord’s Day is to unite with the minister in an act of self-consecration. Always regard your leader of praise as your fellow-minister, entrusted with a high and difficult part in the conduct of public worship; and ere you betake yourselves to your places in the Sanctuary, kneel down with him and supplicate the grace which you both need for the discharge of your common responsibility.

Consecra-
tion of the
service
of praise.

This, then, is the golden secret of effective

Efficacy
of the
realisa-
tion of
Christ's
presence :

preaching—that we should realise the presence of our Blessed Lord and bear ourselves “as if He were at our elbows.” This is the pulpit-spirit, and its efficacy is at least threefold.

(1) Su-
periority
to dis-
courage-
ment.

(1) It lifts a preacher above discouraging circumstances. For example, it frequently happens, especially in rural districts when the weather is inclement, that on entering the pulpit the minister is confronted by a sparse congregation ; and it vexes him that there are so few to hear the message which has cost him so much. Perhaps he loses patience and even perpetrates the unreasonable absurdity of upbraiding the faithful few for the delinquency of the absentees. It is indeed very natural that on such occasions one should suffer discouragement ; and it might be not unsalutary if it prompted the preacher to examine himself and inquire whether, if his people were accustomed to receive help from his ministration, they would lightly neglect the ordinance of public worship. But discouragement seldom operates after this gracious fashion. It is generally nothing else than a subtle sort of vanity, resentment of a personal affront ; for there is profound truth in Amiel's aphorism that “nothing resembles pride so much as discouragement.” It would deliver us from

this snare if only we realised the presence of our Lord and bore ourselves after His example, considering how patiently He taught the little company of the Twelve and lavished the treasures of His grace on one poor sinful woman at Jacob's Well. Suppose it were told a preacher on his way to the pulpit that the King was in Church: would it then matter to him who else might be there? And the humblest human audience is glorious and awful if "the Christ be in our midst attending how we teach."

(2) The realisation of His presence pours ⁽²⁾ grace into a preacher's lips. It banishes ungracious thoughts; it diffuses His sweetness in our hearts; and when there is sweetness in our hearts there is fragrance in our speech. Realise that He is "in the midst, attending how you teach," and you will never speak a hard or bitter word. You will never introduce either personal grievances or public controversies. Avoid-
ance of
contro-
versy.

Here observe the example of our Lord and His Apostles. It is written that once a man, <sup>Our
Lord's
example.</sup> evidently one of His disciples, addressed an appeal to Him. His father had died, and he <sup>Lk. xii.
13, 14.</sup> and his brother, who was evidently a disciple too, had a dispute about the division of the

2 Cor.
iv. 2.

inheritance ; and he begged our Lord to intervene. " Master," said he, " speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." No doubt he had a grievance, and our Lord abhorred injustice and preached brotherly kindness ; yet He refused. " Man," He answered, " who made Me a judge or a divider over you ? " It was not that He did not care, but that it lay with His disciples to apply the principles which He inculcated. He presented His high claims, " commending them," like St. Paul, " to every man's conscience in the sight of God " and imposing on every man the responsibility of a personal decision. Is there not here a most needful lesson for Christian preachers, especially in an age of social unrest ? It is surely a dire blunder when the vexed question of the mutual relation between masters and workmen is discussed in our pulpits. It is a difficult and complex problem, requiring for its solution an intimate knowledge of industrial conditions and of the constitution of our social fabric ; and unskilled pronouncements are not only foolish but mischievous. The business of a preacher is not to usurp the office of a judge and a divider where he has no competence, but to proclaim and commend simply and lovingly

the large and beneficent principles of Christianity and leave their application to the hearts and consciences of his hearers, masters and workmen alike.

That was our Lord's method, and it was the method also of His Apostles. They were confronted by monstrous evils in the social order of their day. For instance, there was the institution of slavery ; and how did they deal with it ? Nowhere in the New Testament is it expressly condemned ; and when St. Paul encountered the fugitive slave Onesimus at Rome, he bade him return to his master Philemon, furnishing him with a letter in which he charged Philemon, not to emancipate him, but to receive him kindly and thenceforward regard him, though a slave, as a brother in the Lord. It was unnecessary to denounce slavery. The institution was doomed by the Christian revelation of the universal Fatherhood of God and its corollary, the universal brotherhood of Man ; and its abolition was a mere question of time. And the New Testament hastened the inevitable consummation, not by assailing the evil, but by exhibiting the ideal which put it to shame.

Such was the method of our Lord and His Apostles, and it is the sovereign method in

The
futility
of de-
nuncia-
tion.

every age. Denunciation of special sins is generally a tactical blunder. "If," wrote the Earl of Shaftesbury, the contemporary of Pope, Swift, Addison, and Steele,¹ "the knowing well how to expose any infirmity or vice were a sufficient security for the virtue which is contrary, how excellent an age might we be presum'd to live in! Never was there in our nation a time known, when folly and extravagance of every kind were more sharply inspected, or more wittily ridicul'd." These were the days of the satirists and moralists; yet they were very evil days, and no good came until the satirists gave place to the evangelists, Whitfield and the Wesleys. It was a wise word that Richard Baxter spoke² when he counselled his brethren that "preaching truth is the most successful way of confuting error," and we would do well in laying it to heart. What is needed is not denunciation of sin but rather the presentation of its remedy. Preach the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and win for it a lodgment in your hearers' hearts, and it will accomplish there its own blessed work: it will expel all evil and rectify every wrong. "Don't," says Emerson,³ "be a cynic and

¹ *Characteristicks: A Letter concerning Enthusiasm*, Sect. II.

² *Reformed Pastor*, ch. viii, p. 491.

³ *Essay on Success*.

disconsolate preacher. Don't bewail and bemoan. Omit the negative propositions. Nerve us with incessant affirmatives. Don't waste yourself in rejection, nor bark against the bad, but chant the beauty of the good."

(3) A sense of the Lord's presence trans-figures a preacher in the eyes of his hearers. Here is one of Nature's miracles. The flesh is the veil of the spirit ; and even as there is no lustre in a dark lantern and the kindling of the light within irradiates it, so the kindling of the spirit illumines the face. It is written of Moses that the skin of his face shone while the Lord talked with him on the Mount ; and it is told of Socrates ¹ that, while he discoursed, his satyrlike face looked beautiful, and the very sight of it moved his hearers to tears and turned their hearts. And there is nothing that so enkindles the soul as the love of Christ. It is told of St. Francis of Sales,² that " gentleman-saint," as Leigh Hunt justly styles him, that in the year 1619 he visited Paris, and his preaching profoundly moved the city. " I am surprised," said he to the Bishop of Bellay, " that the people in this great city flock so eagerly to my sermons : for my tongue is

(3) Trans-figuration of the preacher.

Ex. xxxiv. 29.

¹ Plut. *Cat. Maj.* 7.

² Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, i. pp. 517 f.

slow and heavy, my conceptions low, and my discourses flat, as you yourself are witness.” “Do you think,” answered the Bishop, “that eloquence is what they seek in your discourses? It is enough for them to see you in the pulpit. Your heart speaks to them by your countenance, and by your eyes, were you only to say the *Pater Noster* (‘Our Father’) with them. The most common words in your mouth, burning with the fire of charity, pierce and melt all hearts. You have said everything even when you seem to have said nothing.” It is the face that preaches; for the face is the window of the soul, and the mere sight of a face illumined with the love of Christ is a sermon and a benediction.

THE PREACHER IN THE PULPIT

II. THE DELIVERY OF THE SERMON

“ There is (I know not perfectly whence), among the most of the Religious serious People of these Countreys, a suspicion of all that is Ceremonious in God’s Service, and of all which they find not warrant for in Scripture, and a greater inclination to a rational convincing earnest way of Preaching and Prayers, than to the written Forms of Words which are to be read in Churches. And they are greatly taken with a Preacher that speaketh to them in a familiar natural Language, and exhorteth them as if it were for their Lives ; when another that readeth or saith a few composed Words in a reading Tone, they hear almost as a Boy that is saying his Lesson.”

Reliq. Baxt. I. i. § 49.

THE PREACHER IN THE PULPIT

II. THE DELIVERY OF THE SERMON

THERE are three methods of sermon-delivery. Three methods:

1. Writing out the sermon and then taking one's manuscript to the pulpit and reading it off. This method has much to recommend it. Not only has it been practised by many preachers of the first order but it precludes at least two fatal faults—slovenliness and diffuseness. Nevertheless it is open to grave objection. It is not the highest style of preaching. Indeed it is, strictly, not preaching at all. It is rather lecturing ; and, while ensuring literary grace, it lacks the essential quality of personal address. 1. Reading.

2. The second method is—to adopt an old-fashioned designation—"mandating," that is, writing out the sermon and committing it to memory (*memoriæ mandare*), and then reciting it in the pulpit. This is the worst possible method. It has all the faults of the method of 2. "Mandating."

reading besides others of its own. A recited sermon is just a read sermon, the only difference being that it is read not from a written page but from the page of memory. It is artificial and mechanical, and it subjects the preacher's mind to an intolerable strain.

3. Free
delivery.

3. The third method is free delivery. You ponder your message until it has mastered your mind, warmed your heart, and kindled your imagination ; and then you go to the pulpit, quickened in all your faculties, spiritual, intellectual, and physical, and preach out of the fulness of your soul, relying on the present aid of the Holy Spirit. If the thought be clear in your mind, it will infallibly grasp its appropriate expression. For speech is the incarnation of thought, and a vital idea instinctively clothes itself in fitting language. The word leaps to meet the thought.

Distinction
between
free de-
livery
and *ex*
tempore
preach-
ing.

This is true preaching ; it is the only true preaching. It demands preparation no less but rather more than the method of reading ; for, while the latter requires the mastery of one's message, this requires also one's mastery by it. Preparation of one's message is not enough : one must be possessed by it. And here lies the difference between free delivery

and what is known as *ex tempore* preaching. *Ex tempore* means "on the spur of the moment"; and an *ex tempore* preacher is commonly one who makes little or no preparation and speaks without premeditation whatever may occur to him. A ready wit and a fluent tongue may suffice to carry him through; but it is a dangerous experiment, and the habit works spiritual and intellectual demoralisation. There are indeed occasions where it is justified. In sudden emergencies the faculty of impromptu discourse is invaluable; and it is no uncommon experience for a preacher who has prepared a message, to find, in the very act of delivery, his heart withdrawn from it and captivated by another theme. Where the impulse is strong, it is surely a providential leading, and it should be obeyed. More than once it so happened with St. Augustine. It was the practice in his day that before the sermon the passage where the text occurred should be read; and on one occasion he purposed preaching on a short psalm and had prepared his discourse. He intimated the psalm to the reader, but the latter got confused and read another—the hundred and thirty-ninth—instead. In the reader's mistake St. Augustine recognised, as he says, "the will

of God," and, following this rather than his own design, preached on the psalm which had been read.¹ And the sermon which he thus delivered *ex tempore* and which, like all his sermons, was taken down by a shorthand writer, is by no means the least of his great discourses. An incident like this lends no encouragement to neglect of preparation ; for it would have been impossible for St. Augustine to obey that providential prompting had not his mind been richly stored with sacred learning. He was on familiar ground when he addressed himself without premeditation to the exposition of that psalm ; for the study of the Word was his daily business, and no passage was strange to him. He had not prepared a sermon on the psalm, but he knew it well. Its message was in his heart, and it was easy for him to utter it. This is the reward of diligent devotion to sacred learning—that we are versed in the Bible, and open it where we may, we are at home. No emergency finds us unprepared.

Two recommendations of free delivery :

Thus there are occasions when *ex tempore* preaching is justified ; and when occasion arises, it will cause no embarrassment to one whose mind is stored with the fruits of reverent

¹ *Enarr. in Ps. cxxxviii. 1.*

and patient study of the Word. But it is only occasional, and no faithful preacher will make it his habit. Free delivery is not *ex tempore* preaching. It is the utterance of a message which has captivated the preacher's soul, with the natural eloquence which its wonder and majesty inspire ; and it is possible only after diligent and strenuous preparation. It is the most difficult style of preaching, demanding the consecration of heart and intellect and imagination ; and it is strongly recommended by two special considerations.

One is that it is the method which has been followed by the greatest preachers in all ages. There have indeed been exceptions. For instance, Dr. Thomas Chalmers was a prince of preachers, and he read his sermons. But the exception merely proves the rule ; and the moral is truly pointed by the anecdote of an old lady who was inveighing against " read sermons " and was reminded of his example. " Ay," she retorted, " but the Doctor was a fell reader." Chalmers could afford to read his sermons : he was a great preacher *in spite of it*. The fact remains that, with few exceptions, free delivery has been the practice of the greatest preachers in all ages. It was the practice of Origen of Alexandria, St. Chry-

(1) The example of the greatest preachers in all ages.

sostom of Antioch, and St. Augustine of Hippo.¹ Their extant discourses and expositions are mostly reports taken down from their lips by shorthand writers;² and evidences of this appear on the pages of St. Chrysostom's Homilies, those masterpieces at once of sacred rhetoric and of sacred learning, especially those numerous digressions where, as we have already observed, the preacher paused in his argument to deal with some incidental distraction, now to remonstrate with his hearers for letting their attention be diverted by the movements of an acolyte as he lights the church lamps, and again to repress and rebuke an outburst of applause which his eloquence has provoked. Free delivery was the method of those early preachers whose sermons are still our example and inspiration; and in each succeeding generation it has been the method of well-nigh every preacher who has stirred men's hearts.

(2) Its
superior
effective-
ness.

And this leads us to the second consideration: the method of free delivery is recommended by its superior effectiveness. And

¹ Cf. Bingham, *Antiq.* xiv. iv. 11. Reading was the practice in those days of less able or less experienced preachers (cf. *Socr. Eccl. Hist.* vii. 2). That anonymous homily, "Clem. Rom." *Epist.* ii, was a read sermon (cf. xix).

² Cf. my *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, pp. 668 f.

effectiveness is the ultimate test of preaching. That is the best preaching which most surely reaches the hearers' hearts. Your hearers are your best judges ; and to ascertain their verdict you have no need of express testimonies : you have only to observe the eagerness of their interest when, instead of poring over your manuscript, you stand erect and look in their faces and tell them simply and directly what is in your heart.

These are strong recommendations of the method of free delivery for every preacher who would rise to the height of his sacred opportunity. It is indeed a difficult achievement, but what of that ? *Χαλεπὰ τὰ καλὰ*, says the Greek proverb, " all noble things are difficult " ; and their difficulty is a challenge to courage and resolution. It is reported of Origen¹ that he was over sixty years of age ere he made the venture, and what emboldened him to attempt it was the sense of mastery which long and devoted study had inspired within him. If a preacher shirk the ordeal of acquiring in his degree this essential equipment, he would be well advised to decline the lofty way and be content to follow the lower and easier path. For, where diligence and devotion are

A difficult
achievement.

¹ Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. xxxvi.

lacking, free delivery is a perilous method and leads to inevitable disaster. "No doubt," says Coleridge,¹ "preaching, in the proper sense of the word, is more effective than reading; and, therefore, I would not prohibit it, but leave a liberty to the clergyman who feels himself able to accomplish it. But, as things now are, I am quite sure I prefer going to church to a pastor who reads his discourse: for I never yet heard more than one preacher without book, who did not forget his argument in three minutes' time; and fall into vague and unprofitable declamation, and, generally, very coarse declamation, too. These preachers never progress; they eddy round and round. Sterility of mind follows their ministry." This is indeed a salutary admonition. If we dread the perils which beset it, then let us shun the high and difficult road and be content to follow the beaten track of unambitious mediocrity. But surely there is a more excellent way, befitting faithful men who desire, like the Apostle, to "glorify their ministry." Face the difficult road and conquer its difficulties. "All noble things are difficult," and for this very reason brave souls choose them.

Rom. xi.
13, R.V.

It may perhaps seem to you that free de-

¹ *Table Talk*, January 7, 1833.

livery is not merely a difficult method but one which is impossible for you ; and you may absolve yourself from the attempt by pleading two common excuses—the untrustworthiness of your memory and your constitutional nervousness. Neither is in truth a valid excuse.

What of the untrustworthiness of your memory ? Remember the fable of the prudent man who so feared drowning that he vowed he would never venture into the water until he could swim. Trust your memory, and it will not fail you ; and practice will strengthen it. Trust makes trusty ; and an untrustworthy memory is an untrusted memory. Whatever really interests you there is no fear of your forgetting ; and if you have strenuously and lovingly thought out your argument, it will remain clear in your remembrance.

And as for nervousness, it is no hindrance to preaching. On the contrary, what hinders is stolidity, and nervousness, if duly controlled, is an actual help. Macaulay tells¹ of one of the ablest Parliamentarians of his day that he never rose in the House of Commons without feeling his knees tremble under him ; “ and I am sure,” he adds, “ that no man who

¹ Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, ch. iv.

has not some of that feeling will ever succeed there." And no man will ever preach greatly unless his blood leaps, his pulses throb, and his whole frame tingles when he faces his congregation.

Two
secrets of
success :

We never know what we can do until we try ; and perhaps one who never realised that free delivery was possible for him till his sight failed him for a season after the strain of revising the extensive proof-sheets of his first book *The Days of His Flesh*, and who found in that strait the beginning of a more fruitful ministry, may be permitted to commend the method to others and inculcate two secrets of success.

(1) Diligent
premeditation.

The first is sedulous and strenuous premeditation. Always choose your subject betimes. Determine every Sunday evening, when the day's duties are done, what your next Sunday's themes should be ; nor need you ever have any perplexity, since each Sunday's experience suggests new themes. And once you have chosen a subject, study it. Consult the great commentators and grasp the thought of the sacred writer ; then brood over it till it has permeated your mind. All the while keep breathing an atmosphere of faith and prayer. And finally, with your message

throbbing in your soul, go to your pulpit and pour out the fulness of your heart, telling your people simply and lovingly what the Lord has spoken to you. Have the precious and glorious truth clear in your mind, and it will surely find its proper expression. The fitting language will rise instinctively to your lips. It is—unless this be a merely personal experience—an embarrassment of the message when the preacher writes it out and then tries in the pulpit to reproduce what he has written in the study. The better way is to preach one's sermons first and write them out afterwards. Concern yourself beforehand with the thought, and it will create its own embodiment in the utterance ; for, as we have already observed, it is the natural tendency of an idea to incarnate itself in speech, and if only the idea be there distinct and definite, the language will not be lacking. But remember this : whether before or after preaching, writing is most necessary. The discipline is essential for the avoidance of slovenliness in thought and the cultivation of literary grace. The rule is that at least one sermon should be completely written out every week as carefully as though it were meant for publication.

The other secret of success in free delivery

(2) Or-
derly
arrange-
ment.

is orderly arrangement of the argument. It is not sufficient to have a message : the idea must be clear-cut and well articulated in your own mind. A sermon should have, in Aristotle's phrase, " a beginning, a middle, and an end "—a starting-point, a progress, and a goal. Therefore ere setting out have, as it were, an itinerary before you. Know the road you are to travel, and keep the destination constantly in view. Preaching is like conducting your hearers along a road and pointing out the scenery as you proceed ; and if you have a clear and sympathetic vision, the task will be easy for you and profitable for them. Here lies the use of the old fashion of arranging a sermon under " heads." Whether you have formal heads or no, always have resting-places by the way and fresh starting-points.

**THE PREACHER IN THE
CONGREGATION**

PASTORAL VISITATION

“ Not too anxious to visit periodically all families and each family in your parish connection,—when you meet one of these men or women, be to them a divine man ; be to them thought and virtue ; let their timid aspirations find in you a friend ; let their trampled instincts be genially tempted out in your atmosphere ; let their doubts know that you have doubted, and their wonder feel that you have wondered. By trusting your own heart, you shall gain more confidence in other men. . . . Discharge to men the priestly office, and, present or absent, you shall be followed with their love as by an angel.”

EMERSON.

THE PREACHER IN THE CONGREGATION

PASTORAL VISITATION

PERHAPS the most withering censure ever Preaching and practice. uttered by our Blessed Lord is the opening sentence of His stern indictment of the Jewish teachers of His day. “The Scribes and Pharisees,” He said, “sit on Moses’ seat : all things Mt. xxiii. 2, 3. therefore, whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe : but do not ye after their works.” Those Rabbis held an august office. They were the successors of Moses and the interpreters of his sacred Law, and thus far they were entitled to veneration and obedience. Their office was holy and their precepts authoritative ; but their characters accorded ill with their office, and their practice and their precepts were far asunder. “What seemed to be their honour,” says St. Chrysostom, “He makes their condemnation. For what could be more miserable than a teacher when it saves his disciples to pay no heed to his life ?” And here is a salutary and most needful admonition

for ourselves. Our preaching is unavailing, in truth it is mischievous, nothing else than an offence and a snare, unless our lives be exemplars of it. And therefore, lest we incur this so heavy a condemnation, let us, now that we have considered the employments of the Study and the Pulpit, pass to our business in the Congregation and consider especially the office of Pastoral Visitation.

The term
"pastor."

This is indeed the most difficult and exacting office of our sacred calling ; and a just estimate of it depends largely on a proper appreciation of the term "pastoral." A pastor means "a shepherd," and it is one and by no means the least significant of the New Testament's designations of a Christian minister. It

Ps. lxxx.
1 ; cf.
Pss. xxiii,
lxxiv. 1,
c. 3.
Ezek.
xxxiv ;
Zech. xi.
3-17,
xiii. 7.

was borrowed from the Old Testament. The Lord is there styled "the Shepherd of Israel" ; and the prophets and priests also are called "shepherds" as His representatives.

Thus Moses prayed in the Wilderness : "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in : that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." Our Lord adopted the

Num.
xxvii.
16, 17.

appellation, and called Himself "the Good" Jo. x.
 or rather "the True Shepherd," the Shepherd II, 14.
 in whom the ideal of shepherdhood is realised.
 He is to His people what God was to Israel.
 And just as the Hebrew prophets and priests
 were called "shepherds," so are His ministers.
 He is "the great Shepherd of the sheep," Heb.
 "the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls"; xiii. 20 ;
 and His ministers are His assistant shepherds. I Pet. ii. 25.
 And thus St. Peter counsels his fellow-elders : I Pet. v. 2-4.
 "Tend—be shepherds to (ποιμάνετε)—the
 flock of God which is among you, exercising
 the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly,
 according to God ; nor yet for filthy lucre,
 but of a ready mind ; neither as lording it
 over the charge allotted to you, but making
 yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when
 the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye
 shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth
 not away." St. Paul too employs the image.
 "Take heed," he says, in his address to the Ac. xx. 28.
 Ephesian elders at Miletus, "unto yourselves,
 and to all the flock in the which the Holy
 Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed—be
 shepherds to (ποιμαίνειν)—the church of God
 which He purchased with His own blood."

Observe that here it is Elders or Presbyters "Bishop."
 that are addressed, and they are designated

“Bishops.” “The flock,” says St. Paul to the Ephesian Elders, “in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops”; and when St. Peter bids his fellow-elders “exercise the oversight,” the word which he employs in the original signifies “act the bishop.” The truth is that “bishop” is not a translation at all but merely a confused transliteration of the Greek term *episcopos*, and in view of the official use which it acquired in the later development of ecclesiastical organisation, it should be expunged from the English version of the New Testament. In the apostolic days *episcopos* was not an official title. It signifies properly “an overseer,” and it was synonymous with “pastor” or “shepherd”; and a minister, an Elder or Presbyter, was styled “an overseer,” because his business was to “oversee the flock of God.”

1 Pet. v.
2.

New
Testament
conception
of
the
ministry.

Here is the New Testament conception of the Holy Ministry. Christ is “the great Shepherd of the sheep,” “the Shepherd and Overseer of souls,” and His ministers are His under-shepherds. This is the thought of St. Peter when he styles Him “the Chief Shepherd.” The phrase occurs nowhere else in Greek literature, and it was formerly regarded as a Christian coinage expressing, like “Chief Priest,” a high dignity; but it has recently

appeared that it was in reality a homely and familiar designation in the Common Greek of that period. Here is an inscription discovered on a wooden tablet hung round the neck of an Egyptian mummy and commemorating the man's name and occupation and age : " Plenis the younger, chief shepherd, lived ——— years." Plenis, as the rude inscription and the ill spelling show, was a humble peasant. He was a shepherd, a foreman shepherd with several shepherds under him. Each of the under-shepherds had charge of a flock, and Plenis, the chief shepherd, was responsible for them all. And so, when St. Peter styles our Lord " The Chief Shepherd," his thought is that each congregation is a separate flock and each minister the shepherd of the flock entrusted to his care, but over them all is Christ, " the great Shepherd of the sheep," caring for all the several flocks and directing all His under-shepherds.¹

This is the New Testament ideal. A con-
 gregation is a flock, and its minister is its
 shepherd, tending it under the eye of the
 Chief Shepherd Christ, his master and ex-
 emplar. And thus our pastoral directory is
 our Lord's self-portrayal in His golden parable
 of the True Shepherd. Every office of our

Our
 pastoral
 directory.

Jo. x.
 1-16.

¹ Cf. my *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, p. 590.

sacred charge is there illumined, especially the office of pastoral visitation.

Pastoral
visita-
tion not
an apos-
tolic
usage.

As it is generally practised nowadays, pastoral visitation is not merely a laboriously futile but indeed a positively harmful institution. Assuredly it is not a scriptural ordinance. "I see nothing," says the Welsh novelist Eleazar Roberts in his *Owen Rees*, "in St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy or Titus telling them to be sure to pay regular pastoral visits, and I often think there is a smack of popery and sacerdotalism about the general expectation amongst the people for such visits to be paid. It seems to spring from the old Popish notion of priestly absolution." St. Paul exhorts Timothy to "give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching." "Continue," he says, "in these things ; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." But nowhere in his Pastoral Epistles does he require that a minister of the Gospel should expend his time and his strength in a ceaseless round of visitation among his people's homes. The usage was unknown in the Apostolic Church. There is indeed one passage which is commonly adduced in its justification—that passage in the Book of Acts which tells how the Apostles after the Day of Pentecost, "con-

I Tim.
iv. 13,
16.

ii. 46.

tinuing daily with one accord in the Temple and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." The phrase "from house to house" is taken as an inculcation of assiduity in the business of pastoral visitation; but in truth it is nothing else than a mistranslation. The original signifies, as the Revisers have it, "at home." It is antithetical to "in the Temple," and St. Luke's statement is that the ministry of the Apostles was exercised in two arenas. It was, on the one hand, a mission to the unbelieving world; and here they followed the example of their Lord while He was with them, and preached daily in the outer court of the Temple, that place of public resort. And it was, on the other hand, a ministry of edification. There were as yet no "churches" in the sense of consecrated edifices;¹ and the believers assembled for united worship in private houses, celebrating on every occasion

Cf. I Cor.
xvi. 19;
Col. iv.
15; Phm.
2.

¹ In the New Testament *ecclesia* is always the *coetus fidelium*, the worshipping assembly. There is no certain instance of a building set apart for Christian worship earlier than the third century; nor was it until considerably later that *ecclesia* denominated such a building. Nor even then was this usage approved. The proper term was not *ecclesia* but *ecclesiasterion*; and St. Isidore of Pelusium (c. 370-431 A.D.) protests against the confusion of the two terms (*Epist.* ii. 246): "An *ecclesia* is one thing, and an *ecclesiasterion* another; for the former consists of blameless souls, and the latter is built with stones and timber."

the Sacrament of the Eucharist, "the breaking of bread" after the Lord's example in the Upper Room. And more than that : every common meal, being "received with thanksgiving" and "sanctified through the word of God and prayer," was turned into a communion-feast. And so it is written that "day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart."

1 Tim.
iv. 5.

Our
Lord's
injunction to
the
Seventy.

Neither here nor anywhere else in the New Testament is it intimated that what is nowadays known as pastoral visitation was a usage of the Apostolic Church ; and it is not without significance that in His charge to the Seventy, when He sent them forth on their missions, our Lord expressly and emphatically enjoined : "Go not from house to house." Whatever may have been His precise intention here, this much is plain : their office was preaching, and He would have them shun the distraction of private intercourse. Their business lay with the multitude rather than with individuals.

Lk. x. 7.

*Raison
d'être* of
pastoral
visitation.

Nevertheless, in its proper exercise, pastoral visitation is an effective and indeed essential office of the Christian ministry ; and its *raison d'être* is instructively indicated by our Lord in His parable of the True Shepherd,

where He specifies among the marks of a shepherd that "the sheep hear his voice : Jo. x. 3. and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." All day long the shepherd tended his sheep on the lonely pasture. They were his sole companions, and they recognised him as their protector and friend. He had a name for each, and each knew its name and would answer his call. At nightfall the shepherds led their flocks to the common fold, and the various flocks passed the night, all intermingled, within its sheltering walls. In the morning, when each shepherd would take his flock out to pasture, he had no difficulty in separating his own from the promiscuous throng. He would stand at the door of the fold and call his sheep, and they would troop after him. "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him : for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him : for they know not the voice of strangers." This is the mark of a true shepherd—that he knows his own sheep and has their trust and affection. "He calleth his own sheep *by name*" says our Lord ; and it is remarkable that this phrase "by name (*κατ' ὄνομα*)" occurs in the New Testament only here and at the

close of St. John's third Epistle, where, writing to Gaius and the church he represented, the Apostle says : " Greet the friends by name." Gaius had a personal knowledge of every member of his flock. He had the true shepherd's heart.

And this is the *raison d'être* of pastoral visitation. It acquaints a preacher with his people and with the circumstances of their lives, and enables him to enter intelligently and sympathetically into their experience of joy and sorrow. And it is only so that he can preach to good purpose. There is no helpfulness where there is no understanding.

Rules
for its
performance :

Thus pastoral visitation is a most needful and truly evangelical office ; and if it be prudently discharged, it is not merely a powerful reinforcement of one's ministry but a refreshment to one's own heart and an enrichment of one's own life. And here are two rules for its fitting and profitable performance.

1. Not
mere
social
inter-
course.

1. In your pastoral capacity *never visit a home save as Christ's messenger*. See to it that your visitation is *pastoral* visitation and not mere social intercourse. It is a lost opportunity and a lowering of one's whole ministry when one enters a home and talks, as any ordinary visitor may, of purely secular matters. One cannot indeed be too kindly or too human,

but one should have Christ continually in view. Sit down and talk sympathetically of the concerns of the home—the children, the boys going out into the world, the lad at sea or in the army or abroad ; and then kneel down and commit them all to the Lord, seeking His grace and benediction, and forthwith take your departure without further conversation. A pastoral visit should generally be concluded at the Mercy-seat ; and when we have that end in view, there is little danger of our engaging in unfitting talk. Of course discretion is needful, and there may be circumstances which render a religious exercise inappropriate. The essential desideratum is that, however it be effected, our people should always feel, when we leave their dwellings, as though the Lord Jesus Christ had been in their midst. It was said of the saintly Robert Murray M'Cheyne that, when he visited a home, it seemed a heavenlier place after his departure : it was as though " Holiness unto the Lord " were inscribed on its very walls. The mere presence of a true man of God is a consecration ; but a silent testimony may easily pass unobserved, and surely there is something far amiss if there be a single home in his congregation where a minister has never knelt in prayer.

2. Beware of unministerial relationships.

2. *Beware of falling into unministerial relations with your people.* This is a grave danger, and it is strikingly exemplified in that once popular novel, Margaret Deland's *John Ward, Preacher*.¹ Two of its characters are the New England rector Dr. Archibald Howe, an amiable and honourable but somewhat worldly clergyman, and his lifelong friend Mr. William Denner, an old gentleman of a sweet and retiring disposition. Mr. Denner had sustained a fatal injury in a carriage accident, and the task of informing him that he was dying was imposed by his physician on Dr. Howe. It was an uncongenial office for the good rector.

“ ‘Of course it seems natural to the doctor that I should be the one to tell him. I’m his pastor, and he’s a member of my church—Stay! is he?’ Dr. Howe thrust out his lower lip and wrinkled his forehead, as he thought. ‘Yes, oh yes, I remember. We were confirmed at the same time, when we were boys—old Bishop White’s last Confirmation. But he hasn’t been at communion since my day.’

“ ‘Why do you think that is, Uncle Archie?’ Helen asked.

“ ‘Why, my dear child, how do I know?’ cried the rector. ‘Had his own reasons, I

¹ Ch. xxi.

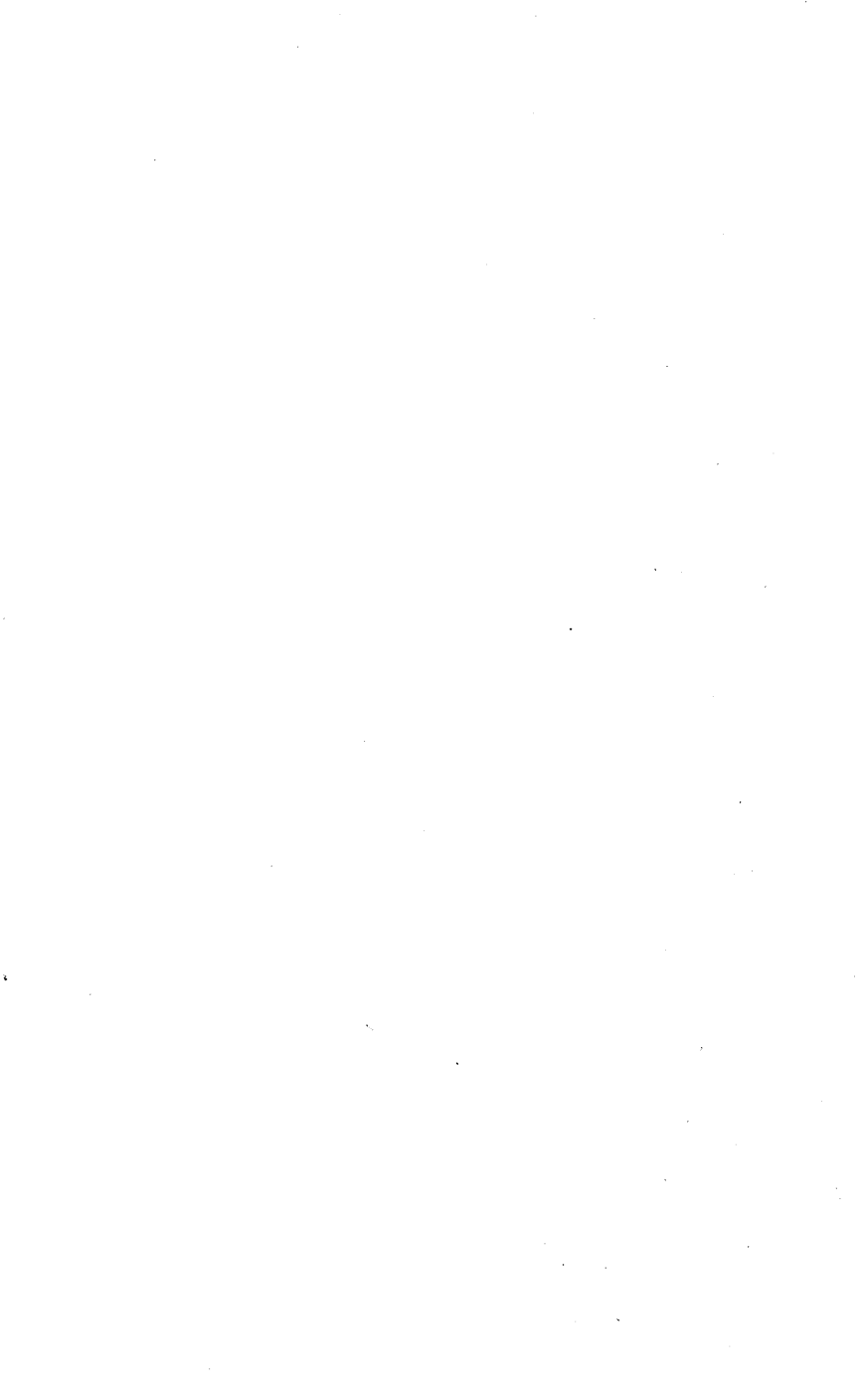
suppose. I never asked him. And you see, Helen, that's what makes it so hard to go and tell Denner that—that he's got to die. Somehow, we never touched on the serious side of life. I think that's apt to be the case with friends in our position. We have gone fishing together since we were out of pinafores, and we have played whist—at least I've watched him—and talked politics or church business over our pipes ; but never anything like this. We were simply the best of friends.' ”

Here is a warning which all whose business is the cure of souls should lay well to heart. It may not indeed be necessary that a minister should refrain from mingling with his people in pleasant pastimes ; but it is most necessary that he should scrupulously maintain his sacred character and never suffer himself to be betrayed into such relationships with them as would render converse on “ the things which belong unto their peace ” unnatural. He should always bear himself as Christ's representative, so manifestly caring for their highest welfare that, when occasion arises, they will readily turn to him and tell him the trouble of their souls. It is in no wise enough that he should be a kindly friend and a pleasant companion : he should be a spiritual coun-

sellor, a man of God, a messenger of Christ. Establish this relationship at the outset of your ministry and sedulously maintain it to the last. "Watch for your people's souls, as they that must give account, that ye may do it with joy, and not with grief." Is it too much to affirm that a minister has failed in his duty unless, ere long time has elapsed, he have found an opportunity for intimate converse with every one entrusted to his pastoral care on the supreme question of a personal interest in Christ?

PRAYER

EVER blessed God, who art Light and in whom is no darkness at all, and who hast vouchsafed to a dark world the light of the knowledge of Thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ, Thine Eternal Son, our only Saviour, prosper and sanctify our study of Thy Sacred Word, the precious record of this Thy marvellous revelation ; and as all our human wisdom is but foolishness without the illumination of Thy Holy Spirit, grant us His continual aid, that, being taught of God, we may attain daily unto fuller knowledge of the Truth and be fitted ever more and more for the Holy Ministry whereunto it has pleased Thee to call us : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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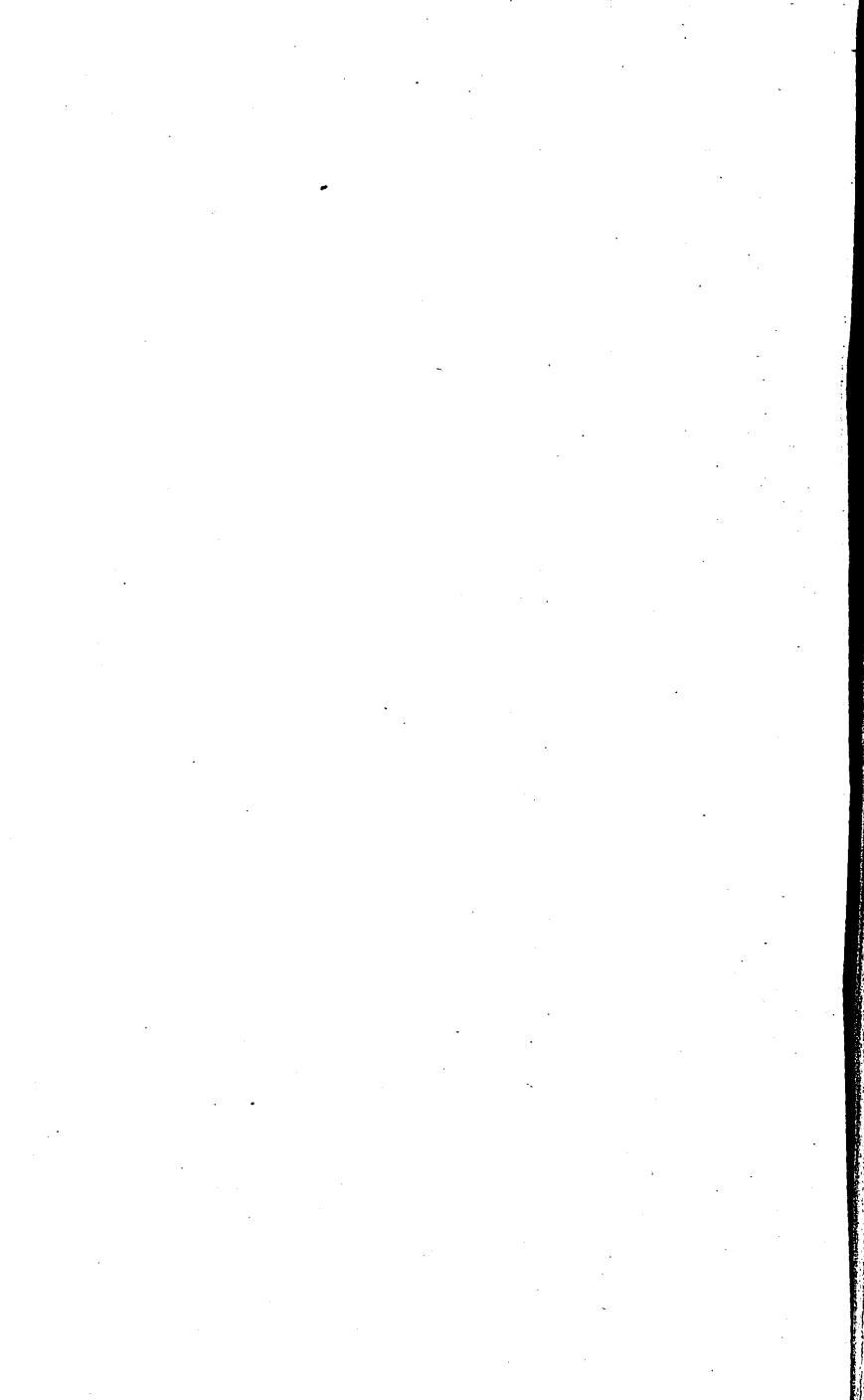
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